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HOW IT HAPPENED.

BY T. M. B.

How did it happen? you want to know?
Well, old boy, I can hardly tell,
Off we went o'er the frozen snow;
Merrily jingled each silvery bell;
I was awkward and she was shy,
Jove! what a ride that Christmas night!
Trees and houses a-flying by,
Her cheeks a-glow and her eyes a-light.

What did I say? I said 'twas cold;
Tucked the robes round her dainty feet,
While her hair, in the starlight, shone like gold,
And her laughter echoed so clear and sweet,
And then we drove around the mill,
Across the river, above the glen,
Where the brooklet's voice was hushed and still
And I said—that it looked like frost again.

And somehow I held her hands in mine—
Only to keep them warm, you know—
While brighter the starlight seemed to shine,
And diamonds sparkled upon the snow,
And—well, old boy, so it happened then
I won my love while the night grew old,
What do you say? Did it freeze again?
Maybe; but we didn't feel the cold.

UNDER WILD SKIES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BENEATH THE SEA."

THE STORY.

CHAPTER IV.

AN INVALID'S FANCIES.

SAM OAKUM was not the only person interested in the new comers, for the clergyman raised his eyes from his book for a few moments, eyed the passengers from top to toe, and then, lowering his umbrella for a little, he went on reading.

"Here we are, my dear," said the gentleman, a tall, military-looking man, with grey beard and moustache; and his words were addressed to a rather delicate girl, whose bright brown hair had been blown about by the breeze, where it had escaped from the confinement of the light sailor's hat she wore.

"Here we are, my dear; just nice time, fine weather in prospect, and a voyage like a yachting trip. Come, come, little coward; why, if you are scared like that at a row in a wherry, what shall you be in a storm!"

"It was not that, papa," said the girl tremulously, "but——"

"Tut, tut, child. What now, giddy, and the vessel at anchor? And you an old sailor! Here, some one please see to the luggage. That's all, is it not, Dinah?"

"Yes, that's all," said the woman addressed rather sharply, as she kept her eyes fixed upon the young girl; and keen, bright eyes they were, looking out of a somewhat hard but pleasant and comely face. As for her age, it mighty have been thirty if you looked at her in one light, for not a wrinkle was to be seen; but when the sun shone full upon her, it was to show a thin streak or two of silver in her smoothly braided hair.

"Ah," continued the gentleman, taking a good look round the deck, "Barker's right; it is a smart vessel. Egad, we shall be respectable, too; with a clergyman on board. Eh! what now? Tut, child!" he cried impatiently, "Why, what is it? You look like a ghost."

"If—if it is not too late, papa," said the girl in a hurried whisper, and evidently greatly agitated, "I should like to give up the trip. I don't feel well, papa, I——"

"Silly child," he said gently, as he stroked and patted her hand. "Are you afraid of the water?"

"Oh no, papa, it is not that. I don't know—don't ask me," said the girl, evidently speaking under strong emotion. "I cannot tell you; but now it has come to the point, papa, I feel a kind of foreboding—a dread that I can't explain. I cannot help the feeling; it is like a presentiment. Dinah will tell you the same."

"Bah! Dinah's as foolish as you are, child. Why, you silly child," he said tenderly. "Not go! Why, here you are giving me stronger and stronger reasons for our going. What was our voyage to be for? Your health. Here you are," he continued, interrupting her as she clung to his arm, "weak, nervous, low-spirited, eager for change one day, and afraid to take it the next. Captain Barker proposes a sea voyage, and because one was unlucky that's no reason why another should be. And such a short distance, too. The doctor says it is the very thing, endorsing it thoroughly. Why, what did he say?"

"Yes, papa, I know, but——"

"'Nerves, my dear sir, nerves,' he said; 'the girl is delicate and overwrought. A sea voyage will set her up!'"

"Yes, papa," said the girl, "but—but in another ship."

"Now, in the name of common sense, why?" exclaimed her father pettishly.

"I cannot tell you, papa; I don't know," said she piteously. "Captain Barker——"

"Yes, Captain Barker has been very kind in putting himself out of the way for us," said the gentleman, again cutting short her speech. "Really, Mary, this is too childish, and I will not have him annoyed by such vagaries. Good heavens, girl, what do you mean?"

"In another ship, papa. You would not listen before—I did not like to tell you—he has been very attentive."

"Why of course he has, you silly, vain child," said the gentleman, laughing. "Oh, Mary, Mary! Attentive! Of course he has, and he'd better keep so. He takes an interest in his old friend's child; and his old friend's silly, weak, vain pet imagines, like all girls of her age, that if a man speaks half a dozen civil words to her he means matrimony. Why, you little goose!" he exclaimed, pinching her ear affectionately, "Barker is more than old enough to be your father."

"Yes, papa, I know," said the young girl piteously.

"Very well then, be satisfied, my dear," said her father. "Ah, here is our captain."

For at this moment Barker, who had heard the voices, came on deck, and upon seeing his visitors, advanced to meet them; but as he did so the young girl gave an involuntary start, stepped backwards, caught her foot against the combings of the hatchway, and would have fallen headlong into a part of the hold but for the ready help of the young sailor, Franks who seeing her danger, made a bound, caught her in his arms, and saved her from what must have been a dangerous fall.

"Mary, my child!" exclaimed her father; the servant uttered a cry, and Barker rushed forward to help were help was not needed, for the girl quiety disengaged herself.

"My dear Miss Raby!" he exclaimed impressively. "What a fright you gave me!"

Mary Raby's reply was to withdraw her hand, now coldly, and place her arm through that of her father.

"Good heavens! my child," he exclaimed, "what an escape! Barker, my dear fellow, how can you leave these yawning chasms in your deck?"

"My dear Raby, I'm heartbroken, as the French would say. Here, Oakum, Franks, see that something is placed round that hatchway for the present."

The young sailor stepped forward, and was dragging a hen-coop to the opening, when Mr. Raby turned pompously to him.

"My good fellow," he said, fixing a double eye glass upon his nose, so as to have a better look at the young man, "you have rendered my daughter a great service, and, rendering it to her, you have rendered it to me. Take this for drink for yourself and companions."

As he spoke he held out a half-crown to the young man, who glanced at the money, then at Mary Raby, and ended by turning pink right up to the roots of his hair.

"Thank you, sir," he said shortly; "one don't want to be paid for doing an act like this."

Then stooping down he placed the coop across the hatchway.

Franks grew redder than ever as he glanced at Mary Raby, whose eyes met his for a moment with a bright look of satisfaction flashing from them, before she colored slightly and lowered her long lashed lids.

"He's bashful, sir; that's about what he is," said Sam Oakum, holding out a great, bony, tarry paw, into which Mr. Raby dropped the coin. "Thanky, sir."

Then with a satisfied grin Sam pocketed the coin, while Mr. Raby nodded in a half-offended, half pompous fashion, and was turning to go aft with Barker, when Mary disengaged her arm and, turning quickly, said to Franks—

"Will you let me look down there, sailor?" Then as he drew aside the girl hastily glanced down into the black hold, shuddered slightly and said quickly, "Papa and I are so much obliged. Thank you. It would have been a terrible fall."

"Yes, terrible indeed," said Barker, who had come close up. "But you see what care we are going to take of you, Miss Raby. There, my lads, secure the place till those hatches can be put on. Miss Raby, let me take you to see the arrangements I have made for you in the cabin."

He held out his arm, which was half flinchingly taken by the young girl, and began to lead her aft, but he stopped short by the great umbrella.

"One moment," he said, smiling; "let me introduce you to a fellow-passenger—the Reverend Onesimus Hicks. Mr. Hicks, this young lady is going to brighten our voyage with her presence."

There was so much assumed gallantry in Barker's manner, that Mary Raby half shrank away; but seeing that her father was close by, she retained her composure, and bowed in return to the clergyman's dignified salute.

"Captain Barker," said the latter, "I am very glad, for the presence of a young lady on board your vessel will doubtless do much to soften the asperities of the voyage. Madam, your humble servant," he continued, bowing with great formality to Mary. "Sir," (to Mr. Raby,) "I trust that we shall be blessed with genial weather, soft skies and gentle breezes. Sir, I trust we shall, for your fair daughter's sake."

"Now, Miss Raby," said Barker, smiling; while Franks watched him furtively, Sam Oakum played with the half-crown in his pocket, and the maid sat grumpily upon a box, apparently letting nothing escape her as she viciously chewed the end of one of her bonnet strings—"now, Miss Raby, let us go below. This way."

There was no help for it, unless she were really rude, and the girl allowed herself to be led away; but she turned her head hastily to exclaim—

"Come, papa."

"Yes, my dear, certainly," said Mr. Raby, and he was about to follow, when the Reverend Onesimus button-holed him, and said, in a thick, unctuous voice:

"Are you a good sailor, sir?"

"Well, yes, pretty good. I have done a great deal of yachting," replied Mr. Raby, gazing full in the heavy, smooth face before him. "I trust you do not suffer?"

"Well, no, sir; I think I may say never, for I have escaped during three dilatory crossings from Havre to Southampton. I hope to fare as well, sir, during this voyage—certainly a longer one than I have yet attempted. I never care though, sir, so long as I have my books. Study, sir, seems to me to be the true natural remedy for sea sickness. If the mind be thoroughly occupied, the mental organism has no fears of the perils of the sea; is blind to its tossing and stormy ways. Study, sir, and a little brandy——"

"Oh, you do take a little brandy?" said Mr. Raby with a half contemptuous smile.

"Yes, sir," said the Reverend Onesimus, smiling too; but his was a large, heavy, fat smile. "Brandy, of which I take a little, like Timothy of old, for my stomach's sake and mine often infirmities. Are you going below?"

"Yes," said Mr. Raby stiffly, "I have not yet seen my cabin."

"Neither have I," said the reverend gentleman. "Ah!" he said, looking down, "my books, my umbrella. Well, I suppose we are at home here, and they will be safe. After you, my dear sir, after you!" he exclaimed, pointing to the cabin door.

"I could not think of it," said Mr. Raby stiffly; "the clergy, sir, always take the *pas*."

"Ah, yes," said the Reverend Onesimus sadly; "it is so, sir; and yet we go through the world preaching humility, brotherly love and the example of the Apostles. Mr. Raby, sir, like me, you must have found that the search for perfection is a chase after a shadow. Well, my dear sir, we will go in arm in arm."

And, followed by the eyes of the servant and the sailors on deck, the clergyman passed his arm through that of his fellow-passenger, and they descended the cabin stair together.

CHAPTER V.

A COMMON SAILOR.

"WELL, my lad," said Sam, reseating himself upon the deck, "I reckon we're in for it."

There was no answer, for the young man's eyes were fixed upon the cabin skylight, and he seemed to be in a brown study.

"D'yer hear? I say I think we're in for it: a blackbird aboard and two she women! Hang me, lad, if I don't feel inclined to risk all and cut and run. But how came you to be such a fool about that there money?"

"Humph!"

There was a sharp angry ejaculation that made both men turn round hastily to where the servant had sat unheeded, but who now beckoned Franks to her, held out her hand, took his and shook it heartily.

"Thank you; that was very bravely done. My poor darling might have broke her neck—bless her! As for you," she continued sharply, as she turned to Sam Oakum, who had risen from the deck and now stood rubbing his tarry hands down the sides of his tarry trousers, "as for you—a great, big, fine-looking man like you——"

Sam Oakum's rugged countenance took a horrified aspect, and he shrank back a step as the woman went on—

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself. You're big enough to know better. Why didn't you warn us about your ugly pit-holes and places?"

"Well really, mum—" began Oakum, who looked frightened, and stood rubbing his hands down his trousers like a schoolboy.

"Well really, mum," cried the woman sharply. "What's the good of that? Would 'well really, mum,' have saved my darling's life? Oh, I haven't patience with you. A great, big, able man."

"Yes, mum, able seaman," said Sam Oakum.

"Able, indeed," said the woman snappishly. "To stand, mum, as you call it, and see a lady fall down your nasty great coal-holes."

"No, mum, the hold," growled Sam. "The coals is in the bunkers."

"Then more shame for you to put 'em there, when they ought to be in the cellar."

"Cellar! coal cellar!" cried Sam, bursting into a hoarse chuckle. "Only hark at her, Jack, my lad; she thinks she's ashore."

"No, she don't then, but she wishes she was," said the woman angrily. "You look half asleep; you want sharpening up, some of you, and I'll do it, too. Who does the cooking here?"

"Poller, mum," said Oakum humbly, his eyes fixed upon his interlocutor.

"Who?" cried the woman sharply.

"Poller, mum, the black cook."

"Black! Good gracious!" cried the woman in horror. "Does he ever wash his hands?"

"There he is a sittin' on that there bale, sunning hisself to make hisself shine, I dessay," said Oakum. "Ask him if he comes off black. Touch him if you like; I don't suppose he'll come off black on yer. Here, Poller; here's a lady wants to speak to you."

The cook leaped off the bale, rolled his opal eyeballs, showed his glistening teeth in a huge grin, and came hurrying up, to lay his hand upon his breast and make a bow.

"Bress the ladies!" he exclaimed. "I berry glad to see um board de *Bella Donna*."

"And so you're the cook, are you?" said the woman, with an aspect of disgust plainly marked on her features.

"Yes, ma'am," said Pollo with a grin; "I hab dat distinkshun. Captain Barker hab great tase in de culinary line. Shall I hab de pleasure ob cook de dinner for dis charming lady passenger?"

"If I don't take it out of your hands," said

the woman shortly. "Here, let me see the kitchen."

"See de—oh golly!" cried the black, shrieking with laughter as he bent down knees, arms and head, clapped his hands upon his thighs and seemed to make a confidant of the deck planks—"see de—ah!—iyah—iyah—iyah—see dee—ho, ho, ho, ho! yah, yah! See de——"

He stopped short, with his nose only about a foot from the deck, for the woman caught him by the wool on the back of his head, jerked him up, and then putting her face close to his:

"What are you laughing at, you great black grinning creature!" she cried angrily.

"I color genlum, ma'm," said Pollo, sobering on the instant, laying his hand upon his breast and speaking with dignity; "I no creature, ma'm. I show de lady de cook galley if she comes along o' me, wid de greatess pleasure; but de kitchen, ma'am! Loramussy, ma'am, whar was you ris not to know we nebber hab no kitchen on board de ship?"

"Nor anything else decent I'll be bound," said the woman sharply. "There, show me the way, mister galley slave; we won't be poisoned while I'm on board, if I can help it."

"I free genlum, ma'am, and no slabe," said Pollo with a dignified bow that would have done honor to a black dancing master. "Dis way, ma'am, dis way. Mass' Sam Oakum, you great, big, rough sailor, you see how de lady take to de polish of de color genlum. Dis way, ma'am, dis way."

Franks hardly seemed to hear his companion's words, for he gave a heavy sigh, and seating himself upon the deck, once more took hold of the heavy sail.

"What are you heaving sighs up out of yer hold like that for eh?" said Sam gruffly.

"Because," said Franks, throwing down the sail and leaping to his feet—"because, Sam, I've been dreaming and have only just woke up."

"Well, what o' that, my lad," growled Sam. "Just you come and sit down and go on with your work. Of course you've wakened up. I wakened you up and made a sharp, bright lad on you, if that's what you mean."

"Yes, Sam," said Franks dreamily, as if talking to himself, "I've wakened up to the fact that I've grown into a full-blooded, strongly made man."

"Right you are, my lad," said Sam. "I made you so with proper training; strong you are as most on us;" and there was a grim look of pride on the old sailor's face as he gazed at the fair proportions of his *protege*.

"And that I am nothing better than a poor, rough, common sailor."

"Here, I say, none o' that," cried Sam gruffly; "rough you are, and rough you should be, my boy; but as to being a common sailor, don't you call things outer their names Common, indeed! Why, you ungrateful young cub, you ought to be thankful to Providence for letting you be brought up to the finest profession in the world."

"Ah, Sam, you don't understand me," said the young fellow with a sigh.

"Don't I!" said Sam gruffly. "I just reckon then I do, and if you hadn't grown so big and ugly, I'd just give you a wipe down with a rope's end for your benefit same as I have scores o' times afore, and made a man on you. Common sailor, indeed! Why, what would you be better?"

"Heaven knows!" said the young man bitterly.

"It's werry plain as you don't."

"There, hold your tongue."

"Hold my tongue, indeed!" said Sam angrily. "Now you're getting sarcy, grumbling and growling, 'cause you ain't some one else. Now if you had been born a woman you'd ha' something to grumble about. I know what it is, my lad, though—it's the pison a working: women aboard."

"Stuff! What foolery!" exclaimed the young man angrily.

"I knowed it—that I did," said Sam. "I felt how it would be as soon as I see 'em in the gangway. Jack, my lad, if you neglects my lessons and gets thinking about them women, I'll never forgive you. Yes, here we are; look at that."

Franks started, for at that moment Mary Raby came up from the cabin, looked round timidly, and then going hurriedly up to Sam, spoke to him, without more than a hasty glance at his younger companion.

"Sailor," she said timidly, "would you mind showing me where my nurse is gone?"

"Nurse, indeed! Hark at her!" growled Sam in an inaudible tone as he turned and spat through an opening in the bulwark, in disgust. "Dont ask me, marm; ask him, his legs are younger than mine."

As Sam spoke he dug his needle savagely into the canvas, and turned his head from the passenger, who raised her eyes timidly and appealingly to Franks, as he stood now before her, hat in hand, gazing reverently down in her sweet young face.

"If you will come forward with me," he said, in a deep musical voice. "I will show you. While she is on board, Miss Raby may always command my services."

Mary Raby looked at him wonderingly.

"And are you—are you one of the com—I mean," she stammered, blushing vividly, —"I mean one of the sailors—I mean are you not an officer—a mate?"

"Haw! haw! haw!" went Sam Oakum, and in her confusion she looked half frightened at him, as Franks turned upon the old man fiercely, evidently under the impression that he was laughing; but his face was like gnarled oak, and went down over the sail-cloth in which he was giving furious digs with his needle.

"No," said Franks bitterly, as he turned once more to the bright, blushing young face beside him, "only one of the common sailors. But here is your servant."

For just then the woman came bustling aft, and catching Mary's hand, led her away from the two men.

"Ah, my darling," she said hastily, "I was coming to look for you. You mustn't talk to the sailors."

"I was asking them to show me where you were, Dinah," said the girl, with a child-like smile.

"That's right, my dear," said Dinah, smiling. "But, oh dear, my child, this place won't do We shall never be comfortable here; it is a pickle of a place. No cooking—no comfort—no nothing."

"Haw! haw! haw!" went Sam again, and Dinah started round, but there was not a smile upon his features.

"That man's a rude bear," said Dinah, loudly enough for Sam to hear, though he never moved a muscle. "My dear, you'd better ask your pa to go in a better ship."

"I did speak to him, Dinah," said the girl eagerly, "but he would not listen to me."

"But you ought not to go in a ship where there are no proper comforts, my child. Go and tell him you feel that you had far rather stay ashore,"

"Oh yes, I would much rather stay ashore," said Mary quickly; but as she spoke she caught the young sailor's eye. "I think I would rather not go," she said, but with less decision.

"Go and tell him so, then," said Dinah, sharply.

"But as we are on board, Dinah," said the girl in a hesitating way, "and it is to make me well, had we not better go? And besides that, there is some man down in the cabin with papa."

"Well," said Dinah sharply, "you've no call to be afraid of no men with me by your side I'll go down with you."

"Just hark at her, Jack," said Sam in a low growl. "That's your blessed woman-kind! If she don't go back ashore, she'll get up a mutiny afore she's been a week on board."

But Franks did not hear him. He was watching Mary Raby, as her companion was leading her aft, but only to see her stop short and turn away as Captain Barker, followed closely by Mr Raby, the Reverend Onesimus Hicks, and the passenger Stuart, came on deck; the former hastening to Mary's side, to exclaim, with a smile—

"Ah, Miss Raby, the cabin seemed quite dark when you left us to come on deck."

CHAPTER VI.

BETWEEN FRIENDS.

MARY RABY seemed to make an effort to preserve her composure, but it was in vain and a bitterly mortified look crossed Barker's face as he saw her shrink from him. But he concealed his annoyance by turning sharply to give an order to Franks and Oakum, which sent them below.

"I really beg pardon," said Barker then, smiling, as he faced his passenger once more. "Ah, Miss Raby, you little know what trouble we poor skippers have with our men; but allow me to introduce our other passenger, the only other passenger of our voyage—Mr. Stuart."

"Charmed I'm sure," said the jewel ambassador to the Court of King Carlos. "Delighted This voyage," he continued, eyeing Mary Raby through his tightly fixed in eyeglass—"this voyage will now be a pleasure indeed."

Mary bowed coldly, and turned to speak to her father; but he had drawn Barker aside, and was evidently speaking to him in a low, angry voice, but upon what business Mary could not hear, and her attention was called to a second polite attack by Stuart.

"So seldom, you know," he said with a most killing smile, "voyages of this sort—rough sailors, and those sort of persons. As to ladies—really, you know, we are quite in luck."

Mary bowed again, more coldly than before, and glanced nervously towards her father, apparently longing for a way of escape from the pertinacious, overdressed dandy who bent down smiling at her.

Help came from an unexpected quarter; for with a slow, stately waddle, the Reverend Onesimus thrust himself in between them, his blue spectacles glistening, and the fat, sedate smile upon his countenance, looking quite beaming as he held out an ungainly arm.

"Allow me, my dear young lady. That's well," he said thickly, as with a bright smile lighting up her face Mary gladly took his arm, involuntarily exclaiming "Thank you!" and they walked together to the side.

"There's a very pleasant view here up the Kentish shore," said the Reverend Onesimus. "You must excuse me, but I thought that young man was annoying you."

"Oh, thank you!" exclaimed Mary. "I was very glad you came."

"Ah, yes, then I was right," said the clergyman slowly. "These young men are very forward sometimes, my child; but it is only from thoughtlessness or vanity—nothing more. But look, we have cast loose. Not frightened, my dear young lady, I hope?"

"Oh no," said Mary composedly; as, in the most quiet way imaginable, with no more fuss or confusion than would have taken place on board a yacht, a thick, heavy man, in pea-jacket and shiny hat, had come on board from a small lug sail boat, spoken afterwards to Barker, and then given his orders, whose effect was that the hawser had been cast loose, the schooner sprang round with the tide, and then with a couple of sails shaken out, she went slowly gliding down the glass of the Thames, with the Kent and Essex shore on either side passing them like a panorama.

"A most charming view on either hand, my child," said the clergyman, as he pointed to the hills "Ah," he added with a sigh, "sunny Spain may be beauteous in orange grove, olive tree, grand mountain, sparkling river, and dark eyed woman, but dear old England has its beauties too, and never looks fairer than at such a time as this."

"When we are leaving her behind," said Mary in a low, sweet voice, as if in continuation of her companion's words.

"Yes, yes, exactly," said the Reverend Onesimus; "but, dear, dear, dear, what am I thinking of? Why, my poor little bird, you have tears in your eyes, and it is my doing. Tut, tut, tut! wipe them away. Why, my dear young lady, in these modern times of travel a run out to Spain and back is but a yachting trip."

"It is very foolish of me," said Mary ingenuously, as she smiled up at her companion through her tears; "but I am weak, sir, and have been very delicate."

"Yes, yes, yes! To be sure," said the clergyman nodding. "So I heard, and you are coming on a voyage to do you good and of course it will. You'll have those little cheeks full of roses in a few days with the salt sea breezes, and look prettier than ever. Don't mind me, my child—an old man's compliments; leastwise not so very old yet, my dear, not in years, but study and trouble makes us old before our time. I hope you like reading?"

"Dearly," said Mary, gazing in his face.

"Then we shall be the best of friends, I m sure Study, my child, is one of the greatest blessings in life. Books are blessings, and —ha! ha! ha! I've brought a portmanteau full of blessings on board."

Meanwhile, unobserved by his daughter, Mr. Raby had followed Barker down into the cabin, leaving Stuart, Esquire, biting his lips and watching the group by the bulwarks; while Dinah sat down on a barrel, pulled out some worsted and began to knit, watching him the while. The two men servants were right in the bows smoking, and watching the ships as they passed, and the crew were busy attending to the pilot's orders, stowing away lumber or coiling down rope.

"Well now that we are below," said Mr. Raby, retaining his erect position, while Barker threw himself on a cushioned seat, "let me have this explanation. I tell you, Barker, I don't understand this. Why are all these people on board?"

"Ah, to be sure," said Barker quietly, "I said come down below and I would tell you. But take a cigar, old fellow!"

"I should have thought, Mr. Barker," said Raby stiffly, "that you would have known me by this time, and that I was not a man to be trifled with."

"Trifled with? my dear fellow, how you talk! No. But take a cigar, they are good."

"Will you have the goodness to tell me why these people are on board your vessel, Mr. Barker?" said Raby, coldly; but though his words were uttered in a perfectly calm voice, there was a dull red spot glowing in each of his sallow cheeks, and an angry light in his eye.

"Certainly, my dear Raby and for goodness sake drop that abominable Mr —— between such old friends, too Why, my dear boy, the thing's as plain as a pikestaff: natural desire to make more money. I've made money, of course, but I like making it still, and so I shall to the end of the chapter. I'm not like you, who pull up so much, and then cry *jam satis* There, there, don't be cross. Hicks is a parson—great naturalist, going to do a book on the flora, as he calls it, of the western Pyrenees. Pays me like a trump for a passage, because I'm going to the very part he wants. Stuart is the trusted representative of a big jewelry firm in Bond street. He's going out with a lot of grand fal de rals for Don Carlos to wear when he gets to be king, and makes presents and so on. His people pay like princes. Don't you see now?"

"See now!" said Raby foaming; "I consider it a regular breach of good faith. I supposed from our conversation that we were to have the cabins to ourselves, and here are this puppy and this fat parson on board."

"My dear Raby," said Barker smiling, and showing his white teeth as he exhaled a puff of smoke. "don't be angry. The parson can't help being fat; and as for the jeweler, he is a perfect gentleman, thoroughly well dressed Really, old fellow, you are too exclusive. Nothing could be more select."

"Select!" exclaimed Raby sharply; "I tell you, sir, it's disgraceful."

"Nonsense, Raby; you are cross," said Barker. "Now do take a cigar."

"Confound your cigars!" cried Raby hotly. "It's perfectly scandalous and a direct insult to my child."

"No, no; no, no." said Barker deprecatingly. "My dear Raby, I would not annoy your daughter for the world."

"Then why have you done this?"

"My dear fellow, I told you," said Barker, giving a glance at the window as passing footsteps overhead told of busy movements on the sailors' part, "I like money, and I make it when I can."

"Barker," exclaimed Mr. Raby, "you've played fast and loose with me; and I tell you that for two sous I'd pay you in your own coin."

"In sous?" said Barker smiling.

"I'd have a boat and be rowed ashore—me and mine!"

"Nonsense, my dear fellow," said Barker, flirting the ash off his cigar. "It would be a long row for the ladies; and besides, what boat would you have?"

"What boat?" exclaimed Raby. "Why your boat—the ship's boat."

"No," said Barker coolly, as he drew a pin from his knife handle and began to prick his cigar, as if to make it draw—"no, my dear boy, that you would not."

"Would not? And why?"

"Because, my dear Raby, I should not allow it."

"Not allow it?"

"Certainly not, my dear fellow. Certainly not. The wind is fair, the tide is running down fast; and it behooves me to make the best of my way out of the Thames."

"And what's that to me?" cried Raby, angrily.

"Not much, perhaps, my dear fellow, but a great deal to me," said Barker coolly. "You see these cargoes Passengers are but a secondary consideration. I take one now and then as a favor, as I am taking you. That is all."

Mr Raby looked startled for a moment; but Barker took the matter with such easy nonchalance, and seemed so much disposed to be smooth, that Raby grew, for his part, more angry.

"Suppose, Mr. Barker," he exclaimed, leaning his hand upon the cabin table and looking the captain in the face, "suppose, Mr Barker, I insist upon being set ashore with my daughter and servant, whom I should never have brought on board if I had known?"

"Well!" said Barker, coolly drawing at his cigar, which now seemed to go to his satisfaction.

"Well, sir, what then?" exclaimed Raby.

"Why," said Barker, in the most indifferent way possible, "you would insist; that's all."

The coolness of the answer staggered Mr. Raby, his opponent seemed so perfectly quiet and good tempered. It was impossible to call the smile upon his face mocking or sardonic, it was only the quiet, satisfied look of one dealing with an irritable child over whom he has unlimited power.

Mr Raby essayed to speak twice. If Barker had spoken angrily he would have met his match, but the cool effrontery of the man set him thinking; and there was that in his next speech that reminded you of the soldier going up to a fort meeting no opposition, but being allowed to advance step by step, till the thought suddenly strikes him that he is progressing upon ground that is mined.

It seemed to strike Mr Raby so: he felt that the ground beneath him was mined, and his voice was decidedly subdued as he exclaimed angrily:

"Have a care, Captain Barker, have a care. I am not in the habit of putting up with insolence."

"No, Raby," said Barker quietly; "you seem to have altered considerably since you became respectable and rich. But without being what you term insolent, allow me to tell you that I am not in the habit of being dictated to on board my own ship There, don't be cross, man; don't be cross. Why should you be so exclusive? Your daughter's happy enough in the society of the plump parson."

"Yes, and that insolent coxcomb, the other passenger, is hanging about waiting for an opportunity to force upon her his attentions! A nice life we should lead if we stayed."

"Tut, man, make yourself easy, I'll take care that your daughter is not annoyed by any person's attentions. Let's have no more nonsense about going ashore, or I shall begin to think that for some special reasons of your own you are afraid of the sea yourself; a dislike because it is connected in your mind with some particular incident in your life"

Mr. Raby looked at the speaker strangely, and there was an angry light in his eye; but Barker was perfectly cool and unmoved as he said, smilingly:

"Why, Raby, you look as if you would like to push me overboard."

"Pish!" exclaimed Raby, biting his lips.

"There, smooth your feathers," said Barker; "settle your ruffled plumes, my dear boy; that sweet girl shall meet with no annoyance while I am captain here."

"I am much obliged, Captain Barker," said Raby recovering himself, "but my mind is made up. I shall go ashore."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MEMORIES.

BY M. B. BRIGHTER.

Christmas fires are burning bright,
And the glowing embers fall.
Lines of rosy flickering light
Steal along the dusky wall.

Now is hushed the noise of day
In that fairy magic glow;
Memory takes her silent way
To the land of Long Ago.

Ah me, what sweet visions rise
From that Past that never dies!
Dear, dear faces, loving eyes,
Fill my heart with tearful sighs.

Stay with us, sweet vision, stay;
Never, never pass away;
Though each cloud and sunlit day
Keep your tender watch for aye.

An Old Man's Treat.

BY WILSON BENNOR.

"CURRY," repeated the old gentleman, testily, for his landlady was a little deaf and he was not a patient man; "a curried fowl or a rabbit; and some more coal; 'tis enough to freeze one's very marrow. Oh—I say——"

"Did you call, Mr. Carr?"

"You don't happen to know those people opposite, I suppose?—the lodgers I mean; first floor, or flat, or whatever you call it?"

"Do you mean the artist, sir?"

"Artist, eh! Yes, so he is. But the lady—a young lady, delicate looking—wife or sister?"

"His wife, sir. The name's Levison, sir. They haven't been there very long. I don't know much about them."

"Thank you, Mrs. Gill, never mind."

Mr. Hugh Carr slowly took off his great-coat, looking up at the cold grey sky, from which a few feathery flakes were dropping. He was an old gentleman, with a sallow face and big black eyebrows, fierce looking enough until he smiled or spoke, either of which actions lighted up his face like a sudden sunbeam. He had neither wife nor child to consider, to spend money upon, or to save it for. There was, it is true, his brother, Mr. James Morville Carr, and his brother's family, for him to seek out; but somehow the thought of these did not seem to comfort him much this evening. They lived in a fine house at the fashionable end of the town, and, as he said to himself, he was battered and ugly, and unfashionable. He might not suit them, nor they him. At any rate, it had been his whim to settle himself comfortably in these unpretending lodgings before he presented himself to his brother. Jim was a rich man, and had a fine lady for a wife. Perhaps his sons would be too much of fine gentlemen to like owning a yellow old man from India as their uncle; they would have fine friends, no doubt; too grand for him. They would——

Here Mr. Carr pulled up suddenly with a gesture and an exclamation, "Here she is again, by George!"

What he saw was a fair head at the window opposite, and it was bent down over some work which the owner must have been in haste to finish, for Mr. Carr could see the swift flying of the needle, and guessed that she had come to catch what remained of the fading daylight. He had seen her once turn from the window to welcome her husband, and the sight had stirred his gentle old heart with a wonderful mingling of thoughts and emotions which he had fancied dead for ever.

"I'm an old fogy, to be sure," mused Mr. Carr," "and she wouldn't care to know it; but the child has done me good. She's like—now, who on earth is she like, or what insane fancy am I going to take next?"

Mr. Carr ate his dinner thoughtfully. You would have smiled to see how the workings of the old man's mind still followed in the same track; how he stopped from time to time to glance round the walls of his room, on which a straggling little picture or two hung, modestly inviting attention; to nod at these, and frown, and mutter to himself, "I've got money—more than I know what to do with. Jim doesn't want it. Jim's children won't want it; that is, not all of it. I should like to do a little good. He may be a genius, for anything I know, but 'tis uphill work for a genius, married and unknown. I'll see about it."

* * * * *

Is your master in?" demanded Mr. Carr.

"Mr. Morville Carr? Ya'as, he's in. What may your business be?"

"I want to see him," said Mr. Carr.

Mr. Morville Carr's footman raised his eyebrows slightly and glanced at the visitor—a sallow, grey-haired man, with a rough greatcoat, and a red muffler covering his throat and chin.

"Tell your master that his brother, Mr. Hugh Carr, wishes to see him."

Mr. Hugh Carr heard his name announced, and saw a tall thin gentleman look up from a writing-table, hesitate a moment, and then rise

"How do you do?" said this gentleman, putting out a cold white hand with a diamond glittering upon it. "Welcome back!"

"Thank you, Jim. I've knocked about the world long enough, but I'm home for good now, I hope."

"Ah, yes, of course," said Mr. Morville Carr. "I mean, that's right. You'll dine with us?"

Hugh did not answer for a moment. Old as he was in the world's ways, he was struggling against a certain bitter sensation of pain at his brother's chill, unmoved greeting.

"No, not to day," he said at last. "I'm not a fashionable man, you see, Jim; and your wife—never mind about that however. The boys—how are they! And my niece and god child?"

"My sons are a credit to me," replied James Carr, pressing his white hands together. "Reginald is on the eve of a very eligible alliance. He is about to marry a lady of rank."

"Hem! He's fortunate," said Mr. Hugh. "And my pretty little god-daughter, how is she?"

A change came over the elder brother's face; it grew even longer than usual; an expression of solemn gravity drew his lips together as he replied:

"You will oblige me by asking no questions concerning her. Indeed, the name is never mentioned amongst us. She—it is a painful subject—she married a low fellow; in fact her own drawing-master. We did our best, but she found means to elude our vigilance."

"You don't mean that you have lost sight of her altogether?" said Hugh.

"Let me beg of you to drop the subject, Hugh. It is just on the stroke of two. You will stay to luncheon, and make acquaintance with my sons?"

"Thank you; another time," said Hugh; "I want to get back now. Good-bye."

He took the white hand in his own once more, and then the supercilious footman showed him out. The man's manner was now scrupulously polite, but Hugh did not notice the change.

Where was she now, this poor little girl, who had been reared in luxury, and abandoned with pitiless indifference to what might be starvation; his pet and god-child, as well as his niece. What was he to do! How should he begin to search for her?

* * * * *

Mr. Carr stood with the young painter who lived opposite him, seemingly looking at the windows of an old book shop, where they met occasionally, and the old man was looking very much in earnest, but his earnestness had nothing to do with the old books.

"Then you think you could manage it for me, eh!"

"Well, replied the painter, "I would do my best. As to its being a likeness, you know——"

"Yes, yes, I know. Of course you can't promise that," said Mr. Carr. "But now, look here. Your wife—I have seen but little of her yet, but I hope to know her better. She is fair, I think—blonde, as people call it."

The artist made a gesture of puzzled assent.

"With blue eyes," continued Mr. Carr. "Well, can't you make her a child again? You know what I mean. Imagine what she must have been as a child, and paint that. 'Tis an old man's whim, you know. Mrs. Levison would not object to sit to you."

Walter Levison laughed quietly at the idea of his wife's objections to any request of his. "Yes," said he; "Milly would sit to me." There was, or Walter fancied it, a sudden contraction of the old man's forehead as he spoke, and he added, hastily, "Don't think me lukewarm about it, Mr. Carr. I'll do my best."

"Yes; thanks," said Mr. Carr. "What did you say your wife's name is? Milly—short for Amelia, perhaps?"

"No, Millicent," replied Walter.

"Ah, 'tis a name that—that is, some one very dear to me bore that name; but it is many years since I lost her."

Walter's ready sympathy woke up at once.

"My wife was always called Millicent at home, but I rarely call her so. Before we were married her name was the same as yours, Mr. Carr."

"Yes, it is a common name."

"Common enough alone, perhaps; but my wife's family add to it. They are the Morville Carrs; that's better, isn't it?" said the young man with an uneasy smile. "The fact is, I—we did what I'm afraid you would think wrong, Mr. Carr. We just fell in love and got married, and the Morville Carrs have cut us. I know that Milly grieves about it sometimes, and then I feel that I was selfish; but still, you see, we love each other, and——"

Walter stopped suddenly. Mr. Carr had broken away from his arm, and scarcely seemed to be listening.

"Yes," said the old gentleman, hurriedly. "I don't blame you. But you'll excuse me now; 'tis getting late. Good night."

Mr. Carr walked off quickly, leaving the painter half angry, half amused at the way in which his confidence had been received.

"What a fool I was to prate about my affairs!" soliloquised the painter; "as if he would care to hear about them! I daresay his Milly was a sister, after all, and he never had a wife. Well, now for this new whim of his."

* * * * *

"A Merry Christmas to you, Mrs. Gill," said Mr. Carr; to which the landlady responded.

"Yes, Mrs. Gill," he said, nodding, "I am lucky. A short time ago I believed myself alone in the world—a desolate old man, with no one to care for me or to be cared for. Now I hope for better things. Ay, true, the time's getting on, and my guests will be arriving. Everybody indulges in some treat at Christmas, don't they, Mrs. Gill?"

"I suppose so, sir," was the reply.

"Right," said he. "I hope you will. And your little boy, he wouldn't be offended if I sent him a Christmas box, eh? No, that's right again. I'm going to have a rare treat myself, and I should like my neighbors to be happy too. You see that square packet, Mrs. Gill? You wouldn't guess it, now; but that's my Christmas treat. Did I hear the door bell?"

Left alone, Mr. Carr turned to the fire and poked it. Then he went back to his old post at the window, passing complacently by the table, with its glittering silver and glass. He lifted the blind, but all was dark in the painter's room. As he looked towards it he saw again in his mind's eye the little scene which had been enacted there only yesterday, when he had taken the liberty of sending Mrs. Levison a present—only a white dress with pink ribbons—nothing very extravagant or costly, but he hoped she would wear it to night. He believed she would.

He heard steps on the stairs, and the opening of a door. He could even, he fancied, detect the rustle of a light dress in the little drawing-room, and then a man's footstep. Mr. Carr was strangely moved. His landlady came to the door, and he silenced her with a gesture. He knew who was in the next room a great deal better than she did.

"Dinner, if you please, Mrs Gill."

Then he went to the folding doors and opened them softly. He saw her before she saw him. She was standing on the hearth in a white dress—his dress; a tiny wreath of holly in her hair; and as he looked, she turned to answer some speech of her husband's, and saw him. How that dinner passed off Mr. Carr could scarcely have told, but it was very merry to all appearance. In the little silence that followed the removal of the cloth, Walter, chancing to look at his host, uttered a sudden exclamation. Mr. Carr put up his hand quickly for silence, and Walter saw that he was trembling.

"Milly," said the old man, wistfully, "my little Milly, my dear niece and god-child, don't you know me?"

A look of bewildered inquiry passed over Milly's face, and then she said, hesitatingly, "Uncle Hugh!"

Walter started up from his seat, and stood beside his wife. What if this Uncle Hugh should take his brother's side, and try to separate them? Milly must have guessed his thought, for, still looking at Mr. Carr, she had turned towards her husband and put her arm through his. The old man smiled.

"Ay, cling to each other," said he. "Let it be so through life. Walter," he added, pointing to the picture, "there she is as I saw her last, fifteen years ago. She put her arms round my neck and kissed me then. Now——"

The old gentleman stood up, and stretched out his hand to her, drawing her to him; he bent down and kissed her forehead, and then he touched the packet on the table.

"My wedding gift to you and Walter," he continued. "I am rich. Please God, when I die, my money shall not lie a weight upon my soul, which might have done good and would not. I like better that you should have your portion now, rather than wait till I am dead. I please myself in thinking that I shall see you enjoy it. I have had visions lately of a corner in some happy home where I may sit now and then, a welcome guest, instead of moping alone over my fire, a dismal waif who belongs to no one. Shall I be welcome, Milly—for auld lang syne?"

"Uncle Hugh, do you know all? You are very good to me—to us both."

"You are all I have in the world," he replied; "remember that. I might have told you this before, but I wished to keep it till now. I wanted it for my Christmas treat. Besides, I had a whim; forgive it, Walter; I wished to study my nephew a little, myself unknown. And now see, Milly, I put these tiny white fingers of yours into his big palm, and think him worthy of them. He has had a hard fight, eh? Well, better times are coming. Put your packet into your husband's hand, my dear. That's well."

"Mr. Carr," began Walter.

"No, call me Uncle Hugh," said the old gentleman.

"Uncle Hugh, then," said Walter. "I cannot tell you——"

"Of course you can't," interrupted Mr. Carr. "Fill your glass, Walter, and take my thanks for the obedience you are going to give me. Draw your chair to the fire; yours, too, little woman. Can't you see how happy you make a life that hasn't been too bright hitherto? Now, a toast—King Christmas! A merry one to us and to everybody, and a Happy New Year when it comes!"

BRIC-A-BRAC.

BOXING DAY.—In England next day after Christmas comes "Boxing" Day. Christmas boxes have been by some derived from *backsheesh*, or presents in money; but that is not the true origin of the custom. As the monks went with their boxes from house to house, so did they at Christmas collect for the poor; and to this is traced the term.

FINE WOOD ENGRAVING.—In the wood-engravings of Albert Durer the inventor of wood-engraving every pebble on the earth, every feather on the parrot, every vein in every leaf is represented. In the clasp of the bracelet of a female saint of small scale, he has introduced a Crucifixion with the Virgin and St. John. In most of his portraits also, even when small, we find the bars of the window reflected on the iris, and literally every hair given.

FORMATION OF LANGUAGES.—By a curious combination of words, the Zulus call cannon "Bom-by-by." The "Bom" is simply the natural attempt of the savage to imitate the sound of the discharge from a distance, but the "by-by" is an adaptation of the term "by-and-by," conveying exactly the same meaning. "Bom-by-by" therefore means a gun which has two discharges—once when the charge is ignited, and the second on the explosion of the shell.

A FEATHER IN HIS CAP.—This expression is probably taken from the very general custom in Asia and among the Indians in this country of adding a new feather to their head-gear for every enemy slain. The Kaffirs of Cabul stick a feather in their turban for every Mussulman slain by them. So do and have done all barbarous tribes. So did the ancient Syrians. In Scotland and Wales it is still customary for the sportsman who kills the first woodcock to pluck out a feather and stick it in his cap. In fact, the custom seems universal.

THE CAUSE OF WAR.—One day, several years ago, when Marshal Prim was alive he called on Queen Isabella of Spain, and asked her to change her Ministry. To his delight she consented, and begged him to call next day with a list of the new Cabinet. Turning to go out he caught sight of the reflection of her Majesty in the mirror, thumb on nose and fingers twirling. Quick as lightning he made a low bow and left, devoting himself henceforth to her dethronement. The event gave rise to the quarrel between France and Germany, the war, the conquest, the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, and the $1,000,000,000 fine.

INVENTION OF CORK STOPPERS.—The invention of cork stoppers for bottles is attributed to the Benedictine monk Perignon, who from 1668 to 1715 was butler at the farm of Hautvilliers, belonging to his order. The old Greeks and Romans, at all events, knew nothing of cork stoppers, and stopped the earthen or—then very dear and rare—glass vessels which they took with them on their journeys and which were wound round with willow branches, bast, straw, or rushes, with a tin mouthpiece. The manufacture of these flasks was an important work in Athens and elsewhere; from them are descended the so-called demijohns of to day. For a long time—perhaps a thousand years—bottles were stopped with a flax stopper dipped in oil.

AN OLD LOVE-CHARM.—Roses are admittedly the emblem of love. An old tradition says that a rose gathered upon Midsummer eve and kept in a clean sheet of paper until Christmas day will be fresh enough for a maiden to wear in her bosom, when he who is to be her husband will come and take it out. In Thuringia the rose holds a similar position as a love-charm; a maid who has several lovers will name a rose-leaf after each, and then scatter them upon the water, that which sinks the last representing the future husband. In some parts of Germany it is customary to throw rose-leaves on a coal fire as a means of ensuring good luck. In Germany, as well as in France and Italy, it is believed that if a drop of one's blood be buried under a rose-tree it will ensure rosy cheeks.

GERMAN BOYS.—German school boys have no public games. All their energies are used up in their studies. They take no violent exercise except on the ice in winter. School work is exhausting, and it takes all their energies out of them. In it they do take an interest. And the reason—why they do so is because from early childhood it is impressed on them that their whole future depends on it. The final examination is the day of judgment looming before the children's eyes, and their childish life is a solemn march to that end. At the close of youth, before entering on manhood, comes the terrible day which irrevocably fixes their fate. Unless they issue from that examination with a testimonial of "ripeness," every learned profession is closed to them, and three years' military drill, instead of one, is their doom. As the boy goes to school he passes the barrack yard, where the recruits are drilling. He sees them posturing, goose stepping, tumbling, fencing, marching in mud or snow, and he thinks, "I shall have three years of this unless I work," and it acts as a daily stimulus to exertion.

LOVE'S SAFETY.

BY MARIE S. LADD.

A rough wind, a wild wind
Swept along our lee,
And there were voices in the air
That moaned right drearily;
"But what if waves wash 'round us
In anger, O my sweet,
If love sits faithful at the helm,
And I am at your feet?"

"To starboard! to starboard!"
We hear the call and cry;
The winds in wildest fury
Are raging loud and high;
"But what if rage the tempest,
If love but with us ride
Within our taut and gallant ship,
And I am at your side?"

VERA;

—OR,—

A Guiltless Crime.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CECIL CARLISLE," ETC.

CHAPTER LV.

ONLY a month before what would not Vivian Devereux have given for freedom, for the right to bear his own name, to stand once more before the world, with honor vindicated, a career restored? Now the gyves so fiercely chafed against had fallen from his wrists, the boon yearned for with such a passionate longing was his; but, like Dead Sea fruit, it had turned to ashes in his mouth. He would have laid down years of life; but the cost of freedom was more than life itself, more than his heart's blood, more than thought could have compassed or wildest conjecture imagined. Vera, to all seeming almost a murderess, to him a traitress, separated from him, not by bars and chains and prison walls, but by the inflexible barrier of her crime and her treason—this was the price he must pay for honor and for liberty. Yet in this awful grief his mind was clear, his thoughts were unclouded. For he had a settled purpose—the one purpose now of his life, the task to which every moment, every faculty, must be given. Whatever he suffered was between Heaven and his own heart; whatever it cost him to go into the world that had witnessed Vera Calderon's disgrace and bitter humiliation, he would do it—for her sake, as she, at least in part, if not wholly, for his, courted the shame. The hands stretched forth to clasp his would seem the hands of enemies rather than of friends; the words of welcome would stab sharper than a two-edged sword; but he could bear all, and bear it gladly, if a thousand cruel wounds could take him one step on the way to the one goal he sought—and would find.

He sought no man's counsel, he needed none; and comfort—who could give?

"Go where the hunter's hand hath wrung
From forest cave her sleepy young,
And calm the lonely lioness,
But soothe not, mock not, my distress."

"Admit no one to my presence," was his injunction to Alphonse, "unless Lord Cascelles should come; I will see him."

And Lord Cascelles did come; and Vivian rose, and, without a word at first, clasped the young man's hand in his own with all in that silent token and in his face that the most eloquent tongue could but have feebly expressed—and his "golden tongue" had no language now. Even after many moments he could only say brokenly—

"Heaven reward you, Cascelles—Heaven reward you."

That was all. Was more needed?

Cascelles did not offer to break the long pause that followed. It was for Vivian to speak first.

He turned at length and laid his hand lightly, but with that subtle blending of a man's strength and woman's tenderness in the touch, on that of Cascelles.

"Cascelles," he said, "we were good friends at college, as some college friendships go. I was too haughty and too cynical at heart to make close friendships, even as a youth. But now there is a new tie between us. Long years of friendship could not draw me to you as you have these few weeks. You have been—are—her friend—that is enough."

"Devereux, hush! I cannot hear you speak so; and, if I sought thanks for having been able, though so little, to serve her, she has given them to me by one look that can never fade from my memory—and you, by trusting me."

A strange smile passed over Vivian's lips.

"I am not a man who gives trust readily," he said; "but, when I have given it, I have not been deceived. You are the second of the two in whom I have entire faith."

"It will not be believed, Devereux."

It was Cascelles who first spoke after the silence that followed those words.

"Devereux, I do not ask you anything with regard to the purpose which I know you have in view—the discovery of the real criminal; but, if I can be of service in any way, command me. Don't speak, don't think, of gratitude, of obligation. You, in my place, would be the first to repudiate them."

"My tongue I can control, Cascelles, and so will not wound by speech; but my thoughts I cannot and would not wish to crush. If you can give me help, I will ask it, knowing that thereby I should give you better proof of my gratitude and do you greater service than by words or acts that lie within the range of language or of actions."

A coarser nature would have spoken differently, would have rejected, as an encroachment on one who had already done so much, any further claim on his willing service; but Vivian Devereux's lofty nature simply and instinctively responded to the ring of the true metal. The devotion that offered the service was best requited in its unhesitating acceptance. In the same spirit Cascelles did not press the matter; he knew, if he could give assistance, Vivian Devereux would keep his word, and that was enough for him, and so he let that part of the subject drop.

"Devereux" he said, "what I am going to speak of now is, I need hardly say it, not the expression of an idea of my own, either by origin or adoption, nor repeated to seek your confidence, but only what I have more than once heard suggested in club and *salon*."

"I can divine it," said Vivian, as his friend paused, "and can spare you the pain of giving it utterance. It has been suggested that Vera Calderon is sacrificing herself for the sake of some former lover; I am right—your face tells me. Well, why blame those who do not know her for such a conjecture? But to me, Cascelles, it comes in its first freshness from your lips, and you—you never thought it. But is this all? Is there nothing kept back?"

"Why should there be? If worse were said, you must hear of it. No, no; at least, no idea so base has reached me, though doubtless there are minds black enough to conceive it. He would be a brave man who would breathe it now."

"Ay," said Devereux grimly. "One word—but there is a world of terrible meaning in it"—and the low voice quivered with fierce inward passion. "I can scarcely yet," he said, when he could again speak calmly, "give any shape to my suspicions, even in my own mind. My first step will be taken to-morrow. I must see Vera Calderon."

To any other man, Cascelles would have said, "She will not admit you;" but it seemed absurd to raise this objection to Vivian Devereux. He was silent.

"If I fail," said Vivian, rising and walking through the room—"and I know her too well to be certain of success—my after-course is mapped out."

"Devereux, can you contemplate failure in the first attempt? What if——"

He paused, for Vivian had turned quickly, and now stopped before him.

"If I fail in the second?" he said, quietly completing the sentence. "But I shall not."

His indomitable will, his profound conviction, struck the very word "if" out of the vocabulary. Lord Cascelles looked into the dark brilliant eyes, and was silent.

Little more passed between them after that. Cascelles knew that solitude was the companion Devereux must best love now, and, with a delicate tact, he took his leave before his friend could be tempted to wish him absent.

"I will see you in a few days again, Cascelles," Vivian said at parting. "If I do not come to you, call here—you will always be welcome."

"You remain here then? You do not go to Arlington Street?"

"No. I will pass the threshold no more until I pass it with Vera by my side."

"And that day," said Lord Cascelles fervently, catching the inspiration of the stronger spirit, the greater love, "is close at hand."

Vivian's eyes flashed.

"Ay," he said, setting his teeth, "at the very door!"

CHAPTER LVI.

A PRISONER, and alone—all for which the heart beat, the brain worked, the imagination dreamed, "banned and barred—forbidden fare."

It was not for six months that the prison gates had closed upon Vera Calderon, but for ever. She might regain the free air of heaven, the right to come and go as she would, but true liberty—never—unless—— But of that she dared not, would not think—for that she dared not hope. Oh, misery, that the thought had come as a hope!

These cruel barriers seemed almost as a shelter as her racked mental gaze looked forth over the dreary "waste"—the world in which she would be an outcast, an exile from the love that would not doubt; all other loss was nothing beside this awful bereavement, crushing his life and hers at one fell blow. She had been hurled from the highest pinnacle to the lowest depth—from honor and homage to dishonor and contumely; from a palace to a prison; from all that the world could give of wealth, rank, culture, society, to solitude, blank, hopeless, shameful. But she did not realise it; she was numbed, dead to all but the awful knowledge that a trackless ocean rolled between her and Vivian Devereux. The reality of her punishment was far less harsh than that which her mind had pictured and had been prepared to meet. She wore no prison dress, did no ignoble task, was shocked by no association with criminals. The room in which she sat lacked luxuries, lacked the things that to her eyes, trained in a world of beauty, were necessities; but it was not, to all appearance, a prison. Around that bowed graceful form kneeling by the table, with the beautiful head bent on the clasped hands, fell the rich sombre folds of velvet; on the slender finger still flashed the cherished diamond. But she recked not of these things. It was equal to her—it seemed so now at least—whether she were degraded to the level of the lowest felon or treated with courtesy and consideration, waited on—nay, more, given obvious sympathy. Vivian was lost to her—lost to happiness, and her hand had dealt the blow.

They had marvelled at her stony calm, which seemed almost like apathy. She did not seem to take notice of anything, and answered half unconsciously the questions addressed to her. Asked if she desired to see the chaplain, she answered, "No—not now, or ever." Would she like to see any other clergyman? "No," she had said in the same manner; she would see no one, neither clergyman, nor relative, nor friend. That must be clearly understood, there are no exceptions to the prohibition—save one, and it mattered not to speak of her yet, for she had gone back to Cornwall. Would she like to have Aileen Connor with her? There would be no difficulty about the matter if she wished it. But Vera shook her head, thanking them gently. She did not desire any special privilege; her servant would come and see her from time to time, but she could not conveniently leave Temple Rest now. Would she see Sir Vivian Devereux? Then, and for the last time, some of the passion that slumbered beneath that granite composure had quivered on her lips, and flushed, though only for a moment, the marble cheeks. She had said—

"Remember, I said I would see no one. If Sir Vivian Devereux comes, I will not see him."

On the day after the trial she sent for the newspapers, and looked for what was said of Vivian Devereux. Almost without exception he was acquitted of all suspicion; and with a passionate sob she clasped her hands before her eyes.

"Thank Heaven—oh, thank Heaven, he is free—free from the taint of guilt—free to clasp men's hands with hands as spotless—free for a glorious future! Oh, that I could kneel at his feet and tell him all! He could bear separation better then, when he knew the truth, and I could bear it better; for now I live a lie. Will that day never come? Will my death come first?" She rose up and paced wildly to and fro. "Heaven help me," she said, lifting her clasped hands above her head, "that I do, that I must, wish for the day that will unseal my lips!"

Many came that day, and others wrote—among the latter Lord Cascelles. To the first, the inflexible answer was returned; to some of the latter Vera wrote brief replies. To Lord Cascelles she said—

"I cannot say much to you, dear and faithful friend. Words will not thank you; but, if my prayers can avail, if all that heart can avail, if all that heart can feel of deepest gratitude, but cannot utter, can be aught to you, these prayers, that gratitude, are yours."

And that letter was to Ernest Cascelles as a token from a patron saint.

There was one other letter Vera wrote that day, and it was to Adeline Gresham-Faulkner; she had neither come nor written.

"You would do most wisely to leave London; you know on what your present means depend. You thought, doubtless, that you had made some impression on Count Saint Leon; you know better now, and you hate Vivian Devereux. But remember that you have no ostensible reason for disliking him. If he should seek your society, you cannot let him see that you dislike him; you cannot even shun him under the pretence of believing him guilty of his brother's murder, since you have already expressed—as I have been informed—belief in my guilt. You ask why you should avoid him? I answer that you must accept my warning on this point—as you accepted the condition on which I gave you the countenance and the means to move in society—without question. I simply tell you that he may seek and try to probe you concerning the past; that he is a subtle diplomatist, and you are not. Your only safety is in avoiding him. You hate him; but, once within the sphere of his power, he will wring from you whatever he may choose to gain. You are proud of your abilities, and they are good enough for ordinary men and women in the world, but gossamer to him. If you fail me, you know the consequences. If you are willing to face these, take your own course."

This was how, "dear Vera Calderon" wrote to Adeline Gresham-Faulkner—as a master to the tool he despises and controls, while he buys its silence.

But, beyond these necessary letters, and the reading of all that was said concerning the trial, the prisoner neither wrote nor read. She sat for hours quite motionless, gazing straight before her, or walked up and down the room. The fever burned inwardly; outwardly she was calm—terribly calm.

CHAPTER LVII.

JUST as the early winter dusk was beginning to fall, the attendant came into the prisoner's room. Vera was sitting by the table, her head leaning on her hand, the slender fingers buried among the silky raven curls. She looked round with a sudden fear in her eyes and a quick drawn breath. She knew what the woman was going to say.

"Madam, Sir Vivian Devereux asks to see you."

"I told you," said the girl coldly, "that I would not see him. Why did you trouble me?"

"Madam, forgive me. He would not take that answer, and bade me, if you refused to see him, give you this."

She laid a paper on the table, and withdrew respectfully to the door.

Vera hesitated one moment. Should she return the paper unopened, and so avoid the temptation of yielding to his prayer? No; perish the thought! Had she not done him wrong enough?

She read the few lines, and the hand that held the paper closed over it in a convulsive clasp. Her heart seemed to melt within her; her brain grew dizzy.

"You tell me," Vivian had written in Italian—"but not face to face—that you are guilty. If you are, you dare not refuse the man to whom you have given your love and your troth to the right to demand this last proof."

Did his faith fail, or did he believe that she could not pass this final test? But the appeal was irresistible. Prayers, adjurations, she could have withstood; the claim on justice could not be put aside; it was sanctified by the very faith on which it was based.

Without moving, without even looking round, Vera said steadily—

"Admit Sir Vivian;" and the attendant withdrew.

Would she fail now? Had she striven and conquered all in vain, to yield in the very hour of victory to the power, the agony of all-mastering, all-believing love? No; cost the conflict what it might, she would be victor still! He demanded the right to receive this last test. It should be given, and then—then—he might believe her guilty! She heard the door open; she heard his step, and the closing of the door again, and there was silence—awful stillness. She was alone with him now. She would rather have faced a wild multitude thirsting for her blood than this man whom she loved as few can love, who came only to ask for the truth.

"Vera!"

Never—no, not when the name had first passed his lips in the outburst of his passionate love had it thrilled her heart as it did now, uttered softly, sadly, in the gloom of a prison. The living power of that voice filled her with terror—roused her to desperation. If she yielded one step she was lost. She rose suddenly, and turned towards where he stood, with blindly outstretched hands, with wild, hurried, almost frantic words.

"Stand where you are, Vivian Devereux—not one step nearer! I am not looking at you! I cannot—will not! No, no; for Heaven's sake keep back!"

With a smothered cry she recoiled till she stood against the wall, facing him like a hunted animal brought to bay; but the eyes so full of dread and horror shunned his gaze.

Vivian had moved forward, but paused now.

"Vera," he said, in the same tone and manner, and opened his arms, "Vera, come to me!"

But she fell upon her knees, crouching, cowering before him, hiding her face from him, striving to shut out the eyes that looked into hers—that ever looked into hers. She did not need his presence to see them night and day.

"Have pity!" she gasped convulsively. "Spare us both! I am guilty, guilty—you must belive it, Vivian!" She lifted her agonised face and raised her trembling hands. "You must believe me guilty. See, at your feet—to your face—I am looking at you now, Vivian—I tell you that—I—am—guilty!"

Vivian bent down, forcibly raised the slight form, wrapped it in a clasp against which twice her strength might have striven in vain, pressed his lips to hers with a passion that seemed to dwarf even the mingled anguish and rapture of the first meeting after this cruel exile.

"Perish the word on the lips that uttered it!" he said hoarsely. "This kiss shall blot it from them. Oh, Vera, my life, you ask for pity! Give it to me. You ask me to spare us both. I ask it of you. Have I not trusted you to the uttermost? Will you trust me? Will you still, even now, hold in my arms, heart to heart—will you still cling to the lie that wrongs you, but cannot deceive me? Tell me the truth, Vera. By the love you bear me, tell me the truth."

By the love she bore him! That gave her

strength, strength that grew upon her; for at first she lay in his arms, helpless and motionless, unable even to try to free herself, her breathing now rapid, now slow and labored, like the breathing of the dying, her dark eyes closed, the beautiful face that rested on his breast ashen pale, the delicate features sharpened with ineffable pain. Could heart of man conceive the mortal struggle of those few moments!

Silently Vivian watched it. Would his love conquer? Would she yield at last to his almost limitless power over her? He hardly dared to hope it; he made the last effort, but he was prepared for failure. He saw the inflexible resolution coming back to her as the shadow of a cloud creeps over a landscape, the lines of the mobile mouth settling into almost iron hardness, the fluttering breath growing steadier, though the heart still throbbed so wildly against his own. He laid his left hand on her brow, pushing back the clustering curls, and under that light pressure she started and shuddered, with a low moan of pain.

"Vera," he whispered, "must I plead in vain? You cannot believe that you could do me a service by sacrificing yourself to me; you know my love too well for such an error. One word, my darling—only one word. If the guilt rests on one whom you are bound to protect by any tie of blood, by promise extorted from you in the dread of discovery, would I bring shame on your name? What is there I would not do, dare, and suffer for your sake?"

She struggled to speak; twice the quivering lips could not form the words; then one more effort, and the faint whisper came—a pause between each word, as if they were wrung from her.

"I—am—not—worthy—only believe me—guilty—that is the truth—and try—try——" A long pause; then another effort—"I know you will—forgive me that I—made—you witness—against—me!"

"I can have nothing to forgive in you, Vera for I can feel no sense of wrong."

"No wrong? Oh, Heaven!" She opened her eyes and looked up at him now, with wild agonised appeal. "Vivian, release me! You will not believe me—I cannot say more. I told you that the idol you worshipped would turn to clay. Oh, if you would have doubted me then!"

"I could not doubt then or now, Vera; it was not—is not—in my power. Why is it you ask me to believe? You tell me that you were guilty of a crime that was almost a murder, a crime of which you would have been simply incapable if Marmaduke Devereux had been an utter stranger; but, more than this, you, who love me, took the life of my brother, though you stood in fear neither of life nor honor. You ask me, still further, to believe that, having wrought this deed, you fled not—as you would have done—to me, but from me. You would have sought me, confessed the truth, at once. You would not have endured one clasp of my hand, one touch of my lips, while you carried that secret in your heart. But you tell me that, with miserable cowardice, with pitiable falseness, you suffered me to be arrested, sent to prison, for the sin you had committed; that you came to me in that prison and suffered me to hold you to my heart as I hold you now, to kiss the lips that betrayed me by their guilty coward silence; that for two years you bore the load of the crime and treason, and met me once more, yet still guarded your secret, and clung to my love. Ah, Vera, if, loving you less perfectly, I had known you less, my faith might at least have been staggered; but such a tale as this could no more shake it than the summer breeze could rive the granite rocks of Brida!"

As he spoke those last words he loosed his clasp, and Vera sank upon her knees by the table, bowing her face down in her hands, writhing in anguish that could find no vent in tears; and yet in every throb of the breaking heart there was a wild joy that his love was proof against even this crucial test—joy that he would not believe what she had bent every power of her mind to make him believe. Strange and terrible conflict, in which the love that struggled for victory rejoiced, for that very love's sake, in defeat! Vivian bent over her, but did not touch her, for he saw how she shrank from him.

"I know," he said softly, "how I am making you suffer. I know that you cannot bear much more; but, oh, Vera, how could I do aught than plead with you for your own sake—for my very soul's life? For you have raised the one barrier that could part us."

Only a low moan came from the hapless woman at his feet. There was a moment's pause, and then he laid his hand on her shoulder, and there was a touch of sternness in his tone.

"I hope even against hope that, brought face to face with me, you might yield. You have resisted this last appeal; and now I will plead no more; I will see you no more till my hand has won you freedom, till, fulfilling your own words to me, the day of reckoning has come, and Heaven's Justice has discovered the truth."

The girl lifted her hueless face. She strove to say, "That day has come," but she could not, in that awful moment, look in this man's face and utter the lie. She wrung her locked hands in dumb anguish, and turned from him. Surely this was more bitter than death!

Vivian folded his arms tightly across his breast and stood silent too. Was he waiting for her to speak—to confess the truth—even at this eleventh hour? Nerved by that thought, by that fear, she shook off, with a fierce effort, the spell that was on her, and rose suddenly to her feet, pressing both hands on the heart whose throbs seemed to suffocate her.

"I have asked forgiveness," she said convulsively, "and you find nothing to forgive. You tell me I am guiltless in your eyes; you do not even reproach me that I deceive and distrust you. I kneel at your feet, and tell you what I am, and you claim the troth I gave you."

She stopped struggling for breath.

"I claim," said Vivian Devereux, "the troth never given back to me, whose token you wear while you tell me that your sin has broken it."

With a low cry the girl recoiled; her quivering fingers were on the ring, but Vivian's clasp closed like a vice on the little hand.

"You dare not!" he said, under his breath.

Her heart almost ceased beating; her eyes quailed before his; the beautiful head drooped. She stood quite still. She scarcely even trembled now. So for a moment there was silence like the silence of the grave. Then Vivian drew her, unresisting, towards him and folded her arms again.

"You dare not," he said, calm in the very strength of concentrated passion, or indomitable resolve, "set this seal on a lie! In life or death, in weal or woe, we are bound together and cannot be severed. Your heart, clinging to that pledge of a deathless faith, has spoken with a thousand tongues the truth of your innocence—though indeed that testimony were not needed. You would have given back that ring to me long ago if the hand on which I placed it had betrayed me!"

Conqueror in this at least! She could strive no more. In that long close embrace she felt the force of that power of love, of justice, against which a resolve built on falsehood—ay, though "for his sake"—must dash out its life. She was his still—his for ever—and she knew it—knew it with a strange thrill of agony—knew it with a wild unutterable happiness, when he lifted her face to his and kissed her brow and her lips, and whispered—

"Only for a little time, and I will come to you again, my darling, my wife!"

CHAPTER LVIII.

VERA CALDERON'S warning letter was placed in Mrs. Gresham-Faulkner's hands just as that lady was going out for a drive, rendered necessary, as she declared, by the shattered state of her nerves from all she had gone through lately.

To do her justice, she sincerely believed that Vera was guilty of the crime of which she accused herself; but the "shattered state of her nerves" was purely imaginary, and was simply "laid on," like her rouge, for company. Ordering the carriage to wait, she retired to her boudoir and read the letter, and her cheeks flushed and her brow clouded heavily. Mrs. Gresham-Faulkner did not appear to advantage just now. She was deeply wounded in her weakest point. She specially prided herself on her diplomatic powers; she had always chafed, too, under the exclusion from Vera's secret; and now that Vera's actual presence was withdrawn she showed the propensity of the weak mind to fret under control. Vera thoroughly knew the character of the woman with whom she was dealing, and for this reason she had written in terms which it would not have been necessary to employ in speaking. Obstinacy a common accompaniment of a weak will; and it is the almost invariable belief of those who are most easily influenced that they are especially exempt from that failing; and they are certain to select for an assertion of independence the very occasion on which they should be most self-distrustful. Adeline Gresham Faulkner was a representative specimen of this class of mind, with the dangerous additions of a more than ordinary share of the vanity of her sex and the possession of just enough of cleverness to be conceited, and not sufficient depth and breadth to be sensible of her own deficiencies. She also loved notoriety. She longed to be the fashion, and she had an object in appearing in society as a rich widow which was not yet attained. Fiercely as she hated Vivian Devereux, for his very name's sake, his presence in her house would make that house and its mistress the fashion. There was not a leader of the *beau monde* who would not have given anything to be able to say that Sir Vivian Devereux had only called on her, or stopped in the park or the street to speak to her. But all these would be passed by, and that woman's society sought who had been received among the *creme de la creme* only on the strength of Vera Calderon's countenance. Of course Chandos-Devereux would not, and could not, for the sake of *les convenances*, if for no better reason, mix in society. An exception in favor of Stratton Street would therefore be more marked. The women would be jealous of Mrs. Gresham-Faulkner, the men would talk more of her; in short she would be "the rage," and her chances of winning a coronet—at the least a wealthy husband—would be quadrupled. To go abroad would be to lose all. She had, as she believed, everything to hope for and nothing to fear by remaining in London; and if she succeeded in securing a rich partner she would be independent of Vera Calderon. As for the seeming Count Saint Leon's attentions to herself, the discovery of the Count's identity could not entirely open her eyes to the truth that they had no reality in them whatever. Vivian Devereux had borne a decided reputation for *galanterie;* and it was not impossible that, while he loved Vera Calderon, he might have been to some extent charmed by herself. Even her vanity had not gone so far as to conceive that her own attractions could rival those of the "Velasquez beauty"; but it was the nature of the men to be inconstant, and Vivian Devereux, she argued, with the bitterness of a narrow mind that generalises from a single personal experience, was too true to his blood to turn from a Lancelot to a Galahad, even for the sake of such a woman as Vera Calderon.

So she tore up the letter, threw it into the fire, and determined to remain in London. Fatal resolve! Poor fool! If she had but dreamed that her character, her hopes, her wishes, were to Vivian Devereux as the map of a country, miserably defended, over which a skilful general means to advance by strategy, and that every feature of the country was as clearly marked to him as it would have been in a military chart! The points which she believed most impregnable were those against which she had set the mark that denoted greatest weakness; her most tortuous by-path was to him the broadest road. It was a war-game in which she would have done wisely to lay down her arms at once, if she would not accept the only other alternative—flight. To Percy Everest she would say nothing. She had not spoken to him of the previous warning received from Vera, and he had no idea that Vivian Devereux had any suspicion whatever of Mrs. Gresham-Faulkner. She was not, she said to herself, to court interference. Descending at length to her carriage, she ordered the coachman to drive to Hyde Park, where, as the day was unusually fine and balmy for the time of the year, there were likely to be other equipages. Attired in a garb indicative of "mitigated woe," and assuming an expression of harmony with her toilet, Mrs. Faulkner leaned forward a little so that she was clearly visible to whoever might pass her, and bowed sadly to those she knew. She was pleased to observe a considerable number of carriages in the drive, but she bit her lip with anger as she how some who had been used to salute her with cordiality now bowed coldly, and one or two, she felt certain, pretended not to see her.

"So," she said to herself, "I am only the creature of Vera Calderon's smile. I may not even believe her guilty of a crime that only guilt could have induced her to confess, because it does not please her princely lover to credit her statement—or at any rate he chooses to say so. Well, let us see if society will change its fickle face once more. I hate you, Vivian Devereux!" She set her teeth hard. "I am glad—glad to know that though you have escaped the convict's doom, your heart is a sepulchre. But, hating you, I can still make a stepping-stone of you. Ha!" She started and looked eagerly from the window.

She surely could not mistake the bearing and walk of the figure advancing from the direction of the Albert Memorial—it was Chandos-Devereux himself. Hastily pulling the check, she told the coachman to stop for a moment, that she might consider whether she should return home or go round the park once more, and this pause gave Vivian time to come up, while the position of the carriage, athwart the crossing to the gate, would compel him, whether he would or no, to notice the fair occupant.

He had not however the least intention of escaping the encounter. He had seen and recognised the carriage; he saw it halt, and was not deceived when Mrs. Gresham-Faulkner, leaning forward, suddenly started with a look of well-feigned surprise and bowed with an admirably modulated smile. He advanced to the carriage door and held out his hand.

"Mrs. Gresham-Faulkner," he said, "This is an unexpected pleasure."

The woman's heart beat with conflicting feelings as she resigned her lilac-gloved hand to his. She hated him, and yet the music of his voice, the ring of pleasure in its tone—she forgot how inimitable an actor he had proved himself!—his singular beauty, made it hard to remember in that moment the debt she owed him simply because he was a Devereux; and, moreover, she was aware that the meeting must be observed by numbers who knew them both.

"Indeed," she answered him, "I did hope to meet you, Sir Vivian—I was almost going to call you Count Saint Leon. Are you homeward bound—to the Albany, I mean?"

"This is my destination; and you, if I may say so, have done wisely to be here—you are not looking yourself."

"How should I be?" she said, sighing, and glancing at her interestingly sorrowful garb. "Ah, Sir Vivian, you are too kind!"

"To kind? How?"

"You must know—you must have been told that—that——"

"I understand," Vivian interrupted gently; "but I cannot and do not expect all the world to share my thoughts. I can no more bear ill-will for your belief in Vera Calderon's guilt than for what I once believed of myself."

"Sir Vivian, you are too generous; and, ah do not remind me of what I said that day!"

"I will not, from this moment. I only did so as an assurance to you that the memory has left no thorn in my mind."

A carriage with a ducal crown on the panel drew near; the occupant, the stately Duchess of Woodstock, leaned out and bowed to Vivian Devereux; and, as he raised his hat and bowed in return, he saw the slightest possible shade of surprise on the severely well-bred face of her Grace. Adeline saw it too, and her color rose as she answered Sir Vivian.

"Prove your words by accepting the very slight service it is in my power to offer you. My way and yours are one; let me put you down at least within a stone's throw of the Albany, unless you will honor my poor house?"

"I should be only too happy, but you were not going home?"

"I was indeed—honor bright; I had just made up my mind to do so when you came up."

"To refuse a kindness is lame courtesy," said Devereux, with a slight smile flitting over his handsome mouth.

He opened the carriage door and stepped in; and the next moment, as there drove past the Duchess of Woodstock's carriage, Adeline, with a throb of triumph, saw that lady direct a haughty and somewhat astonished glance at herself and her companion, and then turn to some one by her side.

"I should like to know the Duchess," Adeline said sweetly to Devereux; "they say she is a very charming woman."

"My dear Ella," said the Duchess to her daughter, "you saw Sir Vivian Devereux talking to Mrs. Gresham-Faulkner; he has just driven past with her. He is an enigma! But, if he singles her out in any way, of course she will become the fashion."

"Bold thing!" said Ella. "I dislike widows!"

"In the old nursery fable," said Sir Vivian Devereux to himself—he was bending forward and employing at the moment, in gracefully-turned phrases, the dangerous music of his mellifluous voice—"the spider invites the fly into his parlor, and the silly fly accepts the invitation; but in this case the fly actually asks the spider to walk into her parlor! She can hardly be surprised if the spider proves to be a master of the situation."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

They have a singular way of preparing census statistics in Spain. A recent compilation of the subjects of King Alfonso, as well as of the live stock in the kingdom, presents some remarkable features, which appear about as follows in the records:—"In the official year terminating on September 30 1879, the kingdom of Spain, exclusive of colonies beyond the seas could boast of 93 dukes 200 000 horses, 866 marquesses, 2 500 000 asses and mules 639 counts, 8 000 000 horned cattle, 93 viscounts, 23 000 000 sheep, 98 barons, 4 500 000 goats, 16 889 university students and 1 500 000 hogs!" In this heterogeneous fashion the statistical account runs on page after page.

STUDY IN AGE.—Robert Hall the famous divine, when he was passing 60, might be seen stretched upon his rug studying Italian, in order to read Dante; and Johnson, who entered upon every fresh labor with prayer, wrote at 67 a brief petition, "when he purposed to apply vigorously to study, particularly of the Greek and Italian tongues." Greek, he said, is like lace; every man gets as much of it as he can. In this old age he read the "Æneid" through in twelve nights, and had great delight in it; and six months before his death he asked Dr. Burney to teach him the scales of music. This intellectual ardor remained with him to the

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James Barton Key, son of Philip Barton Key, who was shot by General Daniel E. Sickles, in Washington, in the spring of 1859, is now on the stage, and is one of "The Pullman Palace Car Tourist Company." He was formerly a member of the Baltimore bar.

An old farmer in Oakland county, Mich., 81 years old, was turned out of doors by his son. He hobbled round to the barn and burned up the whole establishment, which represented the work of his lifetime. His grit held out to the end.

The last fashionable freak in England is the giving of concerts by ladies of rank in public halls. Lady Folkestone and the Marchioness of Waterford, both fine pianists and singers, are at the head of this "boom."

Miss Josephine Meeker is not coming East to lecture, but will remain at Greeley, Col., with her friends. Her experience at Denver satisfied her.

CHRISTMAS TWILIGHT.

BY A. B. W.

There is no hearth this merry Christmastide
But one dear face is missing, that was wont
To make the joy and sunlight of our lives
Sweeter to us than all the world beside.

In twilight hours the pain is ever keen,
And yet there comes a thought of trembling joy:
How bright the welcome when at last we gain
The things on earth long hoped for, though [illegible]!

Madam Drake.

BY BERTIE HAYLE.

IT was an unusually severe Winter. The snow lay thick upon the Deerstone Rock, and all the luxuriant vegetation that made Goodamevy so "grassy green" and Arcadia-like in the merry summer-tide, had given place to an aspect that ought to belong rather to the north than to the rich west country, even when near Christmas.

The Winter wind blew coldly and with a wail round the homestead where dwelt the family of "War'yer Drake," as his rustic neighbors were wont to designate the great mariner of Devon; and standing in the deep bay window, a lady listened to its piping, looking all the time at the leaden clouds, still heavy with snow. She was a very lovely woman, though no longer in her first youth. Just now her lips trembled, and tears were resting on her cheeks, for to her the wind's voice was full of reproach and complaining.

Madam Drake had been very silly, and was regretting it too late. She had married, when very young, the great mariner who placed the first chaplet of her ocean-crown upon the brow of England. Francis Drake had won the daughter of Sir George Sydenham rather by his heroic deeds than by any personal attractions. And now he stood in the bay window, thinking of their parting and of her gallant husband's last words.

"Pretty one," he had murmured, while she wept upon his shoulder, "I am going on a perilous voyage, this time, from which I may perchance never return. Nay," thou mayest never hear of me more, nor wot whether I am dead or living. Therefore remember, if I return not in seven years, e'en marry again, an' thou wilt, with my free consent and blessing."

She wept too much to speak: her sobs prevented her from vowing, as she then desired to do, an eternal fidelity. He sailed, and the years rolled onward, long, and dull, and cheerless, for no child brightened the hearth he had left desolate.

It was a dreary life for a young and loving woman. True, her neighbors were kind, and she visited at most of the great west country houses; but then the return home always brought a fresh accession of dulness to Madame Drake.

Nearly ten years had she suffered from that "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick;" and those who knew her well, marvelled at her unflinching devotion to the memory of her lost husband: for no one now (least of all, herself) reckoned Francis Drake among the number of the living. And when the seven years were gone without a sign or token, and she was legally free to wed again, suitors had pressed forward to try her fidelity to the great seaman's memory.

Madame Drake, however, rejected all suitors, till in the course of the tenth year, during a visit she paid to her relatives, her fancy was caught by a young courtier of Elizabeth's. It was the strongest infatuation, she acknowledged to herself, that she who had adored Francis Drake should love that trim youth, Sir Humphrey Spiller. He was just such a fop as Shakspeare painted, vexing the brave soul of Hotspur. But he bewitched Madam Drake, and won her consent to be his bride, and she returned to Goodamevy to prepare for her nuptials at the approaching Christmas. But from the moment she crossed the Drake threshold her resolution wavered. On entering the hall, an old sword belonging to the warrior fell from its scabbard to the floor with a sudden clash, and every face turned pale at the omen. Lady Sydenham, who was anxious that her daughter should marry, had accounted for it by the slamming of the hall-door. But Madam Drake could not so regard it.

And now Madam Drake stood in the bay window, listening to the Winter wind; and deeply thinking.

A loud cry startled her from her reverie. It came from the hall. She hurried out to see what caused the alarm, and found her waiting-maid pale and breathless, standing with staring eyes and clasped hands.

"What ails thee?" said the lady. "Has a mouse frightened thee?"

"Oh, no, no, my lady! Good madam, I have seen a spirit madam, as big as the giant in Holy Writ!"

"If this be true," murmured the lady, "he comes perhaps to assure me that I may dare to wed, since he must be no longer living. It is like his generous heart, even in death."

She sighed deeply. Was that sigh echoed in the lonely hall?—the maid thought so, but she was too frightened to be a fair judge.

"Come to my room," said Madam Drake, wearily, "and dress my head for supper—Sir Humphrey and his mother come to-night."

The girl obeyed, performing her task, however, with trembling fingers.

Sir Humphrey and his mother arrived; and in the full light, and seated at a plenteous board (the object of his graceful devotion), Madam Drake forgot for a time herself reproaches and superstitious awe. Her lover was full of pleasant chit-chat; and as his English, made up of strange conceits and puns, was the fashion, Madam Drake was fain to admire it.

"When your infinite condescension," said the lover, "has made me the happiest vassal of the fairest queen of beauty the sun has ever tried to kiss, I must needs take you to the Globe to see Will Shakspeare's last play. There you will behold the Queen's Grace surrounded by her ladies, a perfect galaxy of beauty attired by the Graces."

"But is it true her Grace is greatly displeased at the second marriage of——"

Madam Drake could not finish her sentence. Such a clatter was made at the hall-door that speech became inaudible. She turned pale, and Sir Humphrey also changed color.

"Who can it be so rudely demanding admission?" asked Dame Sydenham, surprised and startled. "Go, John—go, Thomas—and see——"

The servants obeyed reluctantly, but in a moment re-entered the room, looking pale and scared.

"Well, John, who was it?" asked his lady.

"There was no one, madam," replied the man.

"No one?" she repeated. "What made the noise, then?"

"I cannot tell, madam; but Thomas thought——" He hesitated.

"Thought what, simpleton?" she asked.

"That he saw a huge shadow on the snow, lady, like that which Grace saw just now upon the oaken floor."

He spoke in an awed whisper. Madam Drake rose hurriedly from her seat, looked appealingly at Sir Humphrey, and fainted at his feet.

"What was it?" he asked, raising her tenderly. "What has startled her tender spirits thus?"

It was not long ere she revived.

"Mother," she said, rising. "I must go to my room. I am ill at ease. Good-night, Sir Humphrey."

"Good-night, sweet madam," he said, taking the hand she extended, and pressing it gracefully to his lips. "I will watch for your safety—in the house."

The strange noise which had disturbed that night's supper, was but the prelude to a succession of raps.

So Humphrey could not sleep at Goodamevy; indeed, from the first night he did not try to sleep alone. His man-servant lay at the side of his bed well armed; a lamp burned on the table. But scarcely had he closed his eyes before the handle of the door shook violently. If for a moment he slept, raps at the head of his bed awoke him. The whole furniture of his room would move out of its appropriate places, and tumble about in "most admired disorder;" and one night, when the frost was sharpest, invisible hands pulled all the coverlets of his bed off, and continued doing so, every time he re placed them.

In a week Sir Humphrey regretted that he had ever rivalled Sir Francis Drake's ghost. But he was resolved not to forego his claim on the lady's hand. He had in truth laid heavy bets upon carrying off the fair and hitherto inexorable widow long before he saw her, and it was important to him to win his wagers. He therefore hurried on the wedding, mentally resolving that when he had once brought his bride to London, nothing should tempt him to return to the inhospitable wilds of Devon.

The Lady Sydenham aided Sir Humphrey in his efforts to obtain an earlier day; and Madam Drake, unhappy, regretful, and weary, suffered herself, like a weak, silly little woman as she was, to be driven as they would. And yet her heart grew heavier and heavier daily, and her fascinated fancy began to loathe and despise its paltry idol. But what could she do? Her wedding dresses were all ready; the county expected her marriage. Urgent claims these on a woman!

At last the day came which was to give Madam Drake to Sir Humphrey. The house was full of guests, whose presence appeared actually to have scared the spirit-rappers, for they gave no further sign.

Sir Humphrey had gone on before to wait for his bride in the church. The priest and clerk stood ready inside the altar rails; the chapel was crowded with eager and expectant spectators. They waited; the time seemed long; and when a pale servant with a scared face looked in at the door, and beckoned to the bridegroom, a general feeling of alarm prevailed.

"War'yer Drake has a sperated hur away to t'other world, for sure," muttered an aged crone to her neighbor; "he warn't the man to let his wife that was to marry yonder popinjay, who looks frightened out of his seven senses, as I'm a Christian."

Sir Humphrey, as he obeyed the pale messenger's summons, looked indeed as if he were about to encounter the redoubtable "War'yer" in proper person; nevertheless, he hurried to the spot whither John led him, and found there his bride, surrounded by the wedding guests, a captive! An immense piece of stone had detatched itself from one of the overhanging rocks, and fallen on Madame Drake's glistening train of peacock's eyes, and she was utterly powerless to move.

"Sir Humphrey," she said, as he approached her, "draw your sword, I pray you, and free me from this load by cutting off my train."

"Madam—my sweet lady—cut you train! one of the rarest fancy; even her Grace's——"

"Father," interrupted Madam Drake, impatiently, "free me, I beseech you."

The old knight at once obeyed, and with his sharp sword severed the costly garment where it touched the stone.

Once released, Madam Drake turned round, and gazed wistfully upon the fragment. Then she uttered a little cry.

"Look, look!" she panted, pointing to the stone.

All the eyes, following her gesture, beheld an F. D. L. A. S. carved on the stone, in a true love's knot.

"It was thus we pledged ourselves to endless love on our marriage day," she gasped. "Oh, pardon me, Sir Humphrey, I can never be your wife! This is from my husband. It is thus he stays me, for my honor's sake. He lives, he lives! I am sure he lives as if I saw him!"

They could not turn her from this notion, nor persuade her to go a step further from her home. She dismissed the unlucky Sir Humphrey with many courteous apologies and regrets. She bore her father's anger, her mother's entreaties, alike bravely. She would live, she said, and wait, and watch for him, who would yet return. And so lover, and kindred, and friends, left her in wonder and anger, and she was doomed to spend her Christmas alone.

It came, that holy Yule-tide, and found Madam Drake a penitent for the false love which had wandered from its liege lord. In the morning, she wept in church over her fault; in the evening, she sate in the oriel window, watching the moon and listening sorrowfully to the Christmas bells. Suddendenly she rose, and walked into the hall on her way to her room.

A gust of wind proceeding from the open door chilled her. She turned and saw that John was talking to a beggar, a sailor by his dress,—ay! and one wounded and maimed and poor; for his empty sleeve was pinned across his breast, and his feet was bare and bleeding. A seaman had a claim upon her dearest sympathies. She advanced to the door at once. The man begged of her, in a low hoarse voice. She drew a piece of gold from her purse, and gave it to him.

"Take it," she said, with emotion, "for the sake of the loved and lost."

At that moment the moon emerging from a cloud, fell full upon the mendicant's face; and as he took her alms, he smiled. It was a rare peculiar smile, full of tender pity and indulgence. She recognised it at once; and with a loud cry, threw her arms round the beggar's neck.

"Francis, Francis, my husband, my love! I knew you would come—I knew you would come!"

She laughed and wept in a breath, and kissed the "Warrior," and drew him into the hall, and gave him a "right joyous and loving welcome."

Sir Francis Drake had chosen (so runs the legend) to test the fidelity of his wife by coming, like Ulysses, in disguise to his own home. He arrived to find his wife about to wed another, and, with the aid of a trusty servant to whom he revealed himself, he comically avenged the insult by playing on the fears of his cowardly rival. He was the agent in all the wonders which had mystified the wedding guests, and which afterwards confirmed his reputation as a sorcerer.

A LEGEND OF THE DAY.—In the year 1012, an old English chronicler relates that several young persons were dancing and singing together on Christmas Eve in a churchyard, and in their noisy merriment they disturbed one Robert, a priest, as he was performing midnight mass. He in vain entreated them to desist—the more he begged, the more they cut their capers; whereupon priest Robert prayed that they might dance without ceasing. The historian says that they continued to do so for a whole year, feeling neither heat nor cold, hunger nor thirst, neither decay of apparel; but the ground, not having the same miraculous support, gradually wore away, and, before the expiration of their capers, they were dancing away sunk in a hole up to their waists. It is further said by the ancient chronicler of this unique penance, that one Bishop Hubert came to the rescue, and the dancing ceased. Some of the young people died immediately afterwards, others slept profoundly three days and nights, and then went about the country publishing the strange event. The tale has often been referred to by those opposed to dancing.

THE GAME OF FORFEITS.

THE game of forfeits is one of the most interesting as well as amusing, when free from objectionable penalties, which can be indulged at Christmas; yet young folks are frequently at a loss for good forfeits in their game. To help them in this respect we subjoin a few free from absurdity, and which will afford innocent pleasure to all.

THE TRIP TO COOMASSIE.—A gentleman who holds a silk pocket handkerchief in his hand, passes round the company formed into a circle, extended to its greatest circumference, and led by the person paying the forfeit. The gentleman holding the handkerchief kisses all the ladies in turn, and with an air of great deference and politeness wipes the lips of his guide, as though he had received the kisses, while, in fact, he remains an idle spectator of the scene, amid the merriment of the company.

KISSING THE CANDLESTICK.—When ordered to kiss the candlestick, you politely request the lady to hold the candle for you. As soon as she has it in hand, you kiss her under the supposition that she is the candlestick.

THE MAGICIAN'S JOKE.—Take two balls, one in each hand, and stretch them asunder as far as you can; ask any one of the company present to lay a wager that you will not make both the balls come into which hand they name, without bringing your hands together. Some one will naturally say you cannot do it, and will take your offer, when you have merely to place one ball on the table, turn yourself round, and take it up again with the other hand.

GO IF YOU CAN.—Tell one of the company that you will so clasp his hands together that he will be unable to leave the room without unclasping them, undertaking that you will not confine his feet, nor bind his body, nor in any way interfere with his motion. This trick is performed by clasping the person's hands around one of the legs of a piano, or large table, or other bulky article of furniture, too large for him to carry through the doorway.

THE RUEFUL KNIGHT.—The player whose forfeit is cried is so called. He must take a lighted caddie in his hand, and select some other player to be his squire, who takes hold of his arm, and they then go round to all the ladies in the company. It is the squire's office to kiss the hand of each lady, and after each kiss to wipe the knight's mouth with a handkerchief. The knight must carry the candle through the penance, and preserve a grave countenance.

THE MAID-OF-ALL-WORK.—Go to service, apply to the party who holds the forfeit for a situation, say a general servant. The questions to be asked are innumerable, but should always be connected with some domestic occupation—"How do you wash?" "How do you iron?" "How do you scrub the room?" "How do you clean the boots and shoes?" "How do you truss a fowl?" The process must be minutely and accurately performed as the questions are put, and if the replies are satisfactory, the forfeit must be given up.

THE ALMOND FEAT.—Get three almonds or any other eatables, and having placed them upon the table a short distance apart, put a hat over each. Tell the company that you will eat the three almonds, and, having done so, will bring them under whichever hat they please. Whenever you have swallowed each separately, request one of the spectator to point out the hat under which they shall be. When choice has been made of one of the hats, put it upon your head, and ask the company if you have not fulfilled your promise. This trick generally causes much laughter.

THE SHOPKEEPER.—The person whose forfeit is called must go round all the company, and acquaint them with the fact that he is about to set up in business, but, unfortunately, being without capital, it will be necessary, before he can do so, to be supplied with goods on loan by his friends, in order that he make a good show when he opens. He can, if so minded, expatiate in an inflated manner on the bright prospects before him, and tell what an honor it will be to help a friend in misfortune. Everyone must lend something to the shopkeeper; the more absurd the article offered, the greater will be the amusement created. When he has gathered all together, he must take them and deposit them in a corner of the room, and thus end his penance.

THE BEGGAR.—A penitence to be inflicted on gentlemen only. The penitent takes a staff, and approaches a lady. He falls on his knees before her, and, thumping his staff on the ground, implores "Charity." The lady, touch by the poor man's distress, asks him—"Do you want bread?" "Do you want water?" "Do you want a penny?" etc., etc. To all questions such as these the beggar replies by thumping his staff on the ground impatiently. At length the lady says, "Do you want a kiss?" At these words, the beggar jumps up and kisses the lady.

Rob Roy's grave, in the lonely churchyard at Balquhidder, Scotland, is marked by a flat stone about a century old, on which is carved a fir tree crossed by a sword and supporting a crown, but without any name.

WELCOME TO CHRISTMAS.

BY A. C. LEIGHTON.

Let's welcome Christmas once again,
Chase from all hearts both grief and pain,
And joy and happiness let reign
Round every festive board.
Food and wine shall give good cheer
To friends who meet but once a year,
To grasp the hands to them so dear,
Or caress the one ador'd.

Let hope and peace on ev'ry side
With rich and poor alike abide,
None other's faults unkindly chide,
E'en with or without reason.
Let ev'ry action on your part
Show gen'rous hand and noble heart,
Pluck from the suff'ring sorrow's dart,
In this gay festive season.

Let holly on the walls be hung,
The mistletoe from rafters swung,
And songs of gladness gayly sung,
And stifle angry feeling.
With open hand and open door,
Let wealth give welcome to the poor,
Help those who stand on want's bleak shore,
While Christmas bells are pealing.

Bertha's Present.

BY MARKHAM HOWARD.

THERE cannot be another room in all the street so small, and square, and bleak as this one of ours. How tired I am of it! How tired I am of it!"

Bertha Faber, lying on the couch beside the fire-place, and looking round upon the ugly brown and blue walls which the firelight strove hard to gild and beautify, uttered this cry in the fretful, languid tone in which she had uttered it many and many a time before this Christmas Eve.

Up and down the narrow street, outside her window, bright and busy faces passed—faces whose cherry smiles Bertha had never cared to meet, or whose troubled glances could not touch her heart. Ah, Bertha! even the hungry, shivering girl, who stands an instant wistfully watching the genial flicker of the firelight on the ugly paper of the walls, would not envy you—even though you lie within its warmth—if she could read how, as you lie alone in the Christmas twilight, looking fretfully back upon the five and twenty years that lie behind this night, not one day can show itself brightened by the sunny skies of wide, bright, loving thoughts, or beautified by the scattered flowers of kindly words and deeds.

"Bertha, darling, here I am!"

Bertha turned her eyes lowly to the door, no smile brightened them, no word of greeting escaping her lips; yet suddenly the room had lost its cheerlessness; a new happy warmth filled it from floor to ceiling, which the Christmas firelight could not do.

"I have a whole week's holiday, Bertha! Won't we enjoy it—we two together, here!"

"Only a week," sighed Bertha. "How mean to give you only a week!"

Nellie, standing on the rug, took off her hat, and stooped to give her sister a long, tender kiss, whispering, "I am very thankful for a week."

"You ought to have claimed more," said Bertha, without returning the warm kiss. "You work hard enough to deserve a longer holiday."

If Bertha could have raised a glance as clear and loving as that which fell upon her, she would have seen that it was not the hard work only which brought the dark shadows round her sister's wistful eyes.

"I do not work a bit too hard, pet," said Nellie, lightly; "and——" She paused a moment, and then continued, "Bertha, we have always been accustomed to give each other Christmas presents, haven't we? Ah, Bertha, let this be your Christmas gift to me. Try and leave that weary couch for one minute. My arms shall be firmly round you. Oh try, my darling, for my sake."

"Do you think that makes it more possible?" fretted Bertha, avoiding her sister's eyes. "If I could do it at all, I could surely do it for the sake of my own poor suffering self."

For a few silent minutes Nellie sat with her hands clasped tightly in her lap; then she rose, a smile struggling into the patient, hopeful eyes.

"Well, I must go and make my preparations for Christmas Day."

"I cannot think why you mind it, Nellie, giving yourself trouble for nothing."

"Not for nothing," returned Nellie, with tears in her bright young voice. "You are to have a very happy day to-morrow; and I—oh, as for me, you know I always do enjoy this bounteous, beauteous earth."

"I see but little bounty or beauty in it," muttered Bertha, "as far as you and I are concerned."

"I suppose, pet," said her sister, slowly, as she took out her well-worn leather purse, "I suppose that chiefly depends upon ourselves. Our world is bountiful or desolate, just as we choose to see it; our lives are beautiful or bleak, just as we choose to make them."

"You will be out all the evening now, I dare say," mused Bertha, plaintively.

"Not longer than I can help," answered Nellie, the tears very close to her eyes now; "I have many things to do after I come home. I have set my heart on finishing your new dress for you to wear to-morrow."

"Never mind it," sighed Bertha. "What does it matter?"

"Did you try to hem that little frill I gave you before I went away this morning?"

Bertha burst into fretful, childish tears. "You know how it makes my wrists ache to sew. I have told you that often."

"Never mind, dear," returned Nellie, quickly. "That little bit of hemming will not take me five minutes. Don't cry, pet."

"How can I help crying?" sobbed Bertha; "I am so miserable."

"I will see to night," said Nellie, cheerfully, while her lips trembled a little. "If I cannot find you a new book that will make the time pass more lightly for you. Now good bye; don't let the fire out while I am away, for it would be very cold to sit and sew without any. Stay, I will put my work-basket all ready in my place."

"It looks very ugly there, Nellie."

"Do you think so? I am astonished. I think it gives the room an inhabited—I mean a domestic look. There is my place prepared for me. Good bye once more."

"Nellie," began Bertha, her eyebrows contracted a little as she looked up into her sister's face, "you are growing sickly-looking, like myself. You are a great deal older-looking than you used to be."

"Naturally, pet," laughed Nellie, impulsively kissing again the repining lips; "very few people grow younger year by year. I am one of those who advance with the age. Shall I show you the gray hairs that lie *perdus*?"

"There cannot be any. You are only two years older than I am."

"There are a good many, nevertheless. Take care that you do not bring them with sorrow to the grave." After looking back at the door with a smile and nod, Nellie hastened out into the lighted streets.

Clear and sharp through the frosty air came the sound of the great church clock. Ten strokes it told, slowly and lingeringly. As the last one died away, Bertha raised her head, and looked round the room with a shiver. A few coals lay black and lifeless at the bottom of the grate; the room was all in gloom and shadow, save where the uncurtained window let in the gaslight from the street, and where a small candle burned on the table at a distance from Bertha. In its sickly light sat Nellie, sewing; her head bent, her fingers quick and busy, the great, full work basket close beside her. It was quite natural to see Nellie sitting there sewing for her, Bertha felt; yet it had always been so natural to hear her gay, bright voice, and to meet her sweet and ready smile, that she longed for them now with a strange, new longing.

"Nellie," she said, leaning forward a little; but the white face was not raised; the still, patient lips were not unclosed.

"Nellie!"

Bertha's hands were stretched helplessly towards her, her eyes eager in their gaze. "Nellie, are you so tired that you cannot speak to me?"

Watching with painful intensity, Bertha at last saw the quiet head raised very slowly. "Oh, Nellie, speak!" she cried, a long drawn sigh of relief escaping her.

The dark, sunken eyes went up beyond her face, with a tired, far off look in their depths. For an instant Bertha raised hers, trying to follow them; then they came back, trying, but trying in vain, to meet the answering smile which had always been so ready for her.

"Speak to me, Nellie," she pleaded in low, frightened tones. Still the dreamy, weary eyes gazed up beyond her; and Bertha, with quick breath and parted lips, watched them.

"Nellie, Nellie!"

"It is nearly over," Nellie said, with a deep patience on her tired face. "It has been a hard and thankless task for many years, and I am glad it is over now, for I am very weary. My love has been a self-renouncing love; my life an uncomplaining life. And what has been the reward? I have loved her tenderly, waited on her, and watched over her. I have spared her all her life; and her return has been cold and fretful words, or gloomy and complaining looks. I did not ask for acts and deeds of love, I asked only for words and thoughts; and she has given me none. Has she ever lightened my day's toil with loving, parting words; or met me after it with a glad, welcome smile? Every hour of every day I have thought of her. Every morning have I left her with a prayer for her upon my lips. Every night have I returned to her, trying to bring her happiness and ease, but always has she coldly seen me come and go. My life has been a hard, long task, and has failed in its own aim. I am very, very thankful it is over; for I am weary in my heart."

The wide, piteous eyes grew dim in their far gaze; the thin, worn fingers fell from their task.

"Nellie!"

Bertha had risen to her feet; and, standing so, with hands outstretched, she saw the tired eyelids close.

"Nellie! Oh, Nellie!"

One quick movement she made, as she saw the slight figure fall back in its chair; but she knew then that Nellie lay there—dead.

Tottering only for a moment, Bertha crossed the room, and fell upon her knees beside her sister, clasping the thin cold hands, and kissing them passionately, as she moaned to her to come back and listen to one word. "Nellie, my dear, my dear! It never shall be again as it has been so long. Come back, and I will show you how I love you. Oh, why did I never think of this before?" The sobbing cry was hushed, as Bertha, clinging to the drooping figure, prayed softly, in silence. "Oh, Nellie, Nellie, come back to me!"

And then again she bent her face upon the lifeless hands, covering them with hot, anguished kisses, while the awful and unutterable loneliness crept into her heart and seemed to still its very life. The cry, "Nellie, come back to me!" was but faint and feeble now.

* * * * *

"Yes, I am coming, pet. But how dark it is! So you did let the fire out, after all. Well, never mind; only if Rhea Sylvia——. Where are the matches, I wonder? I am not coming over to the sofa until I've lighted the lamp. There now! Why—Bertha! oh Bertha, where are you?"

Nellie was standing gazing, bewildered at the empty couch, when the lamplight fell upon Bertha, kneeling on the floor with her hands clasped on Nellie's own empty chair, and her face buried in them.

"Bertha, my darling, how can this be! How are you here? Did you really try to walk, after all, and without my help? Oh, you should not have done it, my pet."

"Nellie," cried Bertha, holding her with trembling hands, as her eyes danced and sparkled with joy, "you are come—you are come back to me! Nellie, oh, Nellie, what a Christmas gift I have had!"

"You should not have made that effort until I came," said Nellie, battling with the glad tears that rose to her eyes.

"But it was no effort," Bertha whispered. "The power came to me—came to me quite suddenly in my great fear. Nellie, I feel that I need never lose that power again. Ah! can I ever lose it, now that you are given back to me?"

"I suppose you have been dreaming, dear," said Nellie, softly, as she stood beside the couch.

"Was it a dream!" mused Bertha, wonderingly.

"Of course it was, pet," her sister answered, cheerily, though her lips quivered as she spoke; "and it is not very wonderful that you went to sleep in the dark."

"Nellie," whispered Bertha, earnestly, "I want to tell you how grateful I am for the love and care you have given me through all my life. You will never reproach me by telling me how many times I might have told you this before. Nellie, I have felt what it would be to—live without you. I seem to have seen it all, as—as I fancy only the dying see what might have been. I have felt the agony of its being too late, too late to tell you how dearly I love you—how dearly I have always loved you, though I have never shown it, never cared to lighten your toil, never cared to brighten your home. Oh Nellie, I will do so now—I will do so now."

"Let me go, my darling," said Nellie, in a choking voice, as she kissed her again and again, while Bertha clung to her as if she could never let her go. "Lie quietly here for a few minutes, and watch me unpack my parcels. Do you see these two particularly compact ones? Well, they are our Christmas boxes to each other. This is my present to you, and this is your present to me. Can you address it yourself, if I bring you the pen and ink?"

"Yes—oh yes." Then, with trembling fingers, which had not held a pen for years, she addressed the packet in her lap, "Nellie."

She wrote no other word; but, as her sister took the parcel from her, she raised her eyes, and whispered very gravely, very earnestly—

"Nellie, my real Christmas gift for you is a better one, and a dearer one, I trust, than this. It will be the gratitude and love and devotion of all my life from to-night. Oh, my darling, a poor and late return it is for all your tender care, for all your unreturned, unselfish love; but you will take it from me, and forgive me for all the wicked, wasted years."

LOVABLE GIRLS.—Girls without an undesirable love of liberty and craze for individualism, girls who will let themselves be guided, girls who have the filial sentiment well developed and who feel the love of a daughter for the woman who acts as their mother, girls who know that every day and all day long cannot be devoted to holiday-making without the intervention of duties more or less irksome, girls who when they can gather them accept their roses with frank and girlish sincerity of pleasure, and when they are denied submit without repining to the inevitable hardship of circumstances—these are the girls who are really lovable.

In return for jokes played upon others, some one filled the overcoat pocket of Mr. F. P. Guise, a young attorney of Williamsport, Pa., with steel pens. A number of them stuck in his hand, and in taking them out several broke off. The hand is terribly swollen, and it is feared that the consequences may be fatal.

Scientific and Useful.

FOR THE HAIR.—For a cooling lotion for the hair, one made of two drachms of borax and glycerine to eight ounces of distilled water, is effective, allaying dryness, subduing irritability, and removing dandruff.

PHOTOGLYPHY.—Photoglyphy is a new invention. A steel plate is covered with gelatine and bichromate of potash in the usual manner, and an impression printed on it. Perchloride of iron is then passed over the plate, which etches through those portions unacted on by the light.

PAPER FOR CIGARETTES.—A discovery of a new kind of paper for cigarettes has been made in France, and a manufactory has been established at Algiers for carrying it out. The paper in question is made from the refuse stalks and leaves of the tobacco plant, which hitherto have been regarded as useless. Thus the cigarette will now consist wholly of tobacco.

USEFUL HINTS.—To remove grease from wall paper—Lay several folds of blotting paper on the spot, and hold a hot iron near it until the grease is absorbed. Two ounces of permanganate of potassa thrown into the cistern will render the foulest water sweet and pure. To whiten ivory, boil in lime water. A mixture of oil and ink is good to clean kid boots with; the first softens, and the latter blackens them. To clean zinc, rub on fresh lard with a cloth, and wipe dry.

ANEROID BAROMETERS.—Aneroid or dry barometers are now made of pocket-size, compensated for temperature, and with double scales, one reading the height of the barometer column, the other the elevation obtained. One has been found sufficiently sensitive to indicate the ascent from the ground floor to the upper rooms of a three-story house, or to enable the traveler sitting in a railway-train to tell, by watching its face, whether he is ascending or descending an incline.

GAS BURNERS.—A great improvement has been effected in gas burners, by which the brilliancy of the flame is increased as much as sixty per cent., without any increase in consumption of the gas. The result is obtained by enclosing an ordinary glass chimney in an outer glass cylinder, closed at the bottom, so that the air which feeds the flame is made to pass along in contact with the heated glass chimney, by which it becomes heated to six hundred degrees. The air at this temperature effects a more perfect combustion than can be obtained from cold air.

BAD COLDS.—Bad colds cannot always be avoided or warded off, but nearly always. Take note of the very first symptoms; if a cold runs a day or two, it will run two weeks longer, in spite of all remedies. Often simply placing the feet in a warm oven, and holding them there a half hour, will equalize the circulation, and thus break up a cold. But if it will not, go to bed with a bottle of hot water at your feet, a wet towel wrapped entirely around the body over the abdomen, overlaid with a dry one, and place on the bed an extra amount of covering. This will break up your cold before daylight, in nine cases out of ten. We do not simply "guess" at this. We are positive of it.

Farm and Garden.

THE GRUB-WORM.—Of the grub worm that destroys strawberry plants sometimes, it is said by sowing salt freely now—say two or three barrels to the acre—and next spring plowing and harrowing well and setting plants, that grubs will disturb the plants but very little.

POULTRY.—A breeder of poultry says: "Every spring I procure a quantity of cedar boughs and scatter them plentifully in and around the hen house. This is all that is necessary, as the odor of cedar keeps away lice. The remedy is cheap, simple and effective, and is worth trying."

TO BREAK A HALTER PULLING HORSE.—Take a common rope or leather halter, place it on the horse in the usual way, then run the rope or strap through the hole or ring where you hitch, carry the rope to the ankle of the hind foot and tie it; then let him try himself, and five minutes' trial will satisfy him. It will break up the trick altogether.

THE LAWN.—A young hedge of osage orange or honey locust should not be cut until it is two or three years old; not, indeed, until the shoots are one, or even two inches thick. Then they should be cut even with the earth in the winter time, and the following year they will throw up a luxurious mass of sprouts, which may be trimmed into shape the next June, and before fall we have a complete, impenetrable fence.

CARROTS AS FOOD.—Carrots seem to have some peculiar effects on the health of horses, rendering the skin especially glossy and healthy looking. For milch cows, carrots are valuable for the golden tinge and richness which they impart to the butter. They are also more nourishing for cows than turnips are. In feeding carrots, care must be taken that the pieces are not cut in such a shape as to choke the animal. Cut large carrots lengthwise—not across.

TO CURE MEATS.—For curing beef, pork, mutton and hams, the following recipe is good: To one gallon of water take one and a half pounds of salt, one-half pound of sugar, one-half ounce each of saltpetre and potash. In this ratio the pickle can be increased to any quantity desired. Let these be boiled together until all the dirt from the sugar rises to the top, and is skimmed off. Then throw it into a tub to cool, and when cold, pour it over your beef or pork. The meat must be well covered with pickle, and should not be put down for at least two days after killing, during which time it should be slightly sprinkled with powdered saltpetre, which removes all the surface-blood, etc., leaving the meat fresh and clean.

WINDOW GARDENS.—As winter bloomers, the polyanthus narcissus rank first. It is sure to flower. The hyacinth comes next, and the tulip third. It is time enough yet if the ground be not frozen, to plant out bulbs in garden for blooming next spring. Place the hanging basket where it will get the sun for at least a few hours each day, and water frequently, as, being exposed on all sides, it dries out quickly. The drainage of the pots should admit the surplus water to escape easily through the hole in the bottom of the pot. Never allow the water to stand in the saucers. A teaspoonful of mustard to a gallon of cold water will destroy vermin in the earth of flower pots, without any injury whatever to plants. Always cover the window plants when sweeping.

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CHRISTMAS.

ONCE more in the course of the years Christmas visits us. The holy season of love and happiness, showers its blessings upon the earth and wakes the heart to grateful thankfulness. Let the months gone by be what they may, there are few souls that will not respond to the joyful spirit of the time, and few voices that will not join in the glorious song and prayer of thanksgiving, rising from man to God.

It is something our nature may be proud of that the blessings of this glorious time are so well conned. True, the reign of selfishness, of greed, of personal ambition and extonation, is not yet at an end, though these weaknesses of the flesh lose their power beneath the blessed influence of Christ's natal day. Then the sympathy of a common humanity, the consciousness that all are of the brotherhood of Christianity, rises supreme, while the shackles of trade and form drop from hearts and hands, and we rejoice in a feeling of universal love and kinship. It is a time of happiness for all. Those upon whom Fortune has smiled justly show they truly appreciate the bounties of Heaven, whilst those who most labor and suffer in adversity, seek to drive away the shadows of care, that they may not seem discontented guests at the divine feast of happiness to which all are bidden.

If it be that in the rush and clatter of the world's business, some forget the duty of kindness, charity, or affection, they hear the promptings of those still small voices upon this happy day. The barriers of distance, of time, of wealth, of position, of all indeed that makes distinction between man and man, now fall to the earth, that the natural promptings of the spirit within may have free play. The master greets his servant with a kindlier smile and more open hand; the ties of relationship and friendship that may have become relaxed, are drawn closer by mutual aid, and sealed with lasting proofs of love; the breasts that had grown icily hard and callous melt at the touch of gentle Charity, and affection's living waters flow forth as from the smitten rock.

It may be that with some in the passing of the holiday time, old habits and feelings will resume their former sway. The banker may be no less earnest about his six per cent. than of yore, the merchant as anxious to make his bargain close, the employer as solicitous as ever that his workmen stand not with idle hands. But the visit of the Christmas angel that touches the silent pool of so many lives cannot help but make the waters blessed. The recollection of the joy given by some hearty word, greeting or kindly gift, will linger in the memory and give a new glory and pleasure to intercourse with our fellow man. But the influence of such good and kindness does not stop with the doer. Like Mercy—Charity's elder sister—it blesses both him that gives and him that takes. And he who is remembered as one who loved his fellow man at the holy Christmas-tide, has a legacy as priceless as it is glorious and beautiful.

Never listen to idle or loose conversation.

SANCTUM CHAT.

IN 1668 the island on which now stands the city of New York was sold by the Indians to the Dutch for 10 shirts, 80 pairs of stockings, 10 muskets, 30 bullets, 30 pounds of gunpowder, 30 hatchets, 30 kettles, and one copper stewpan.

—

GREAT results are expected from the discovery of the efficacy of exhalation of benzoate of soda in bronchitis and all pulmonary complaints. Some remarkable cures are already reported. Benzoic acid, by the way, has long been employed stomachically for such diseases. Taken too frequently, however, it acts prejudicially upon the kidneys.

—

AN official inquiry into the extent of the tobacco trade in Germany, has brought out the statistics of the pipe manufacture. The annual production of genuine meerschaum bowls has averaged 540 000; of artificial or imitation ones, 5 400 000; of wooden pipe heads, 4 800,000; of common porcelain bowls, 9 500,000; and of pipeclay, 2 700 000; and complete pipes of various materials, 15,000,000 The value of the whole is estimated at about five million dollars.

—

A NEW wood industry, the manufacturing of thread for crochet and sewing purposes, has within the last year been started in Sweden. The manufacture has arrived at such a state of perfection, that it can produce thread of as fine quality at a cheaper rate than the best now made. It is wound in balls by machinery, either by hand or steam, which together with the labeling, takes one minute and twelve seconds, and the balls are packed up in cardboard boxes, generally ten in a box. The production gives fair promise of success, and is expected to be very important for home consumption.

—

A REMARKABLE case of animal instinct has been witnessed in Massachusetts—by whom we are not told. The legend, however, runs as follows: Twenty-two old rats were seen marching down the roof of a hotel to drink from the water in the eaves-trough. Among them was a mother who led five little rats by a straw which she and they held in their mouths. Reaching the edge of the trough, she placed them in a row; then the mother took the first one, winding her tail around it, letting it down to the water, and then placed it to the right in the row of small rats; then she took the one at the left, and, letting it down to drink, placed it to the right again, and so on with the whole; after which they all took hold of the straw, and the mother, with the straw in her mouth, led them to their hole.

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THE plants used at Christmas are various—anything evergreen, according to some authorities, may be used for the decoration of houses or churches; but there are a few which seem more especially peculiar to this joyous season—such are the laurel, the holly, the ivy, the mistletoe, the bay, the fir, the box, cyprus, and the rosemary; and, from remote antiquity, these all have had a symbolical meaning. The laurel speaks of victory; the holly of vigor, and its glowing berries at once of affection and good works; the ivy, which clings with such tenacity to that which affords it support, would suggest to us a close adherence to our Christian duties; the mistletoe, having medicinal virtues, would remind us of Him whose birth we so joyfully celebrate, while its white berries—gems in the crowns of poets—remind us that our thoughts should not be of earth.

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AN English scientist has been making experiments with a view of designing a float to save persons in danger of drowning, and yet be of such capacity as to be carried in the pocket, cap, the fishing-basket of the angler, or the reticule of the lady traveler. Sometime since, with non-swimmers and swimmers, he demonstrated that in the space occupied by a small tobacco-pouch could be carried a float, which, when inflated, (the work of a few moments) would easily support a man or woman in the water, and enable a swimmer to support a non-swimmer for such a length of time as would give means of assistance the opportunity of reaching both. An important feature in the invention is that it is fitted with a valve which will admit the air by the pressure of the teeth, but automatically prevents it from escaping, and has no screws or parts to be lost or mislaid.

—

A MODERN writer says that there is a closer resemblance between man and some animals than is generaly admitted. Thus he remarks a man of the Dundreary type can look very like a terrier. The bull-dog finds his manly prototype in Bill Sykes. Men of sardonic temper and smooth outlines, who are wise enough to wear a white, straight moustache, have a grand resemblance to a Bengal tiger. The resemblance which the writer draws between mankind and the cat and fox is very cleverly done. The resemblance to animals is largely dwelt upon by the Darwinites, who seem to find in this lingering look a proof of the doctrine of evolution. The birds, too, have given us many a resemblance. We talk of the eagle eye, the eye like a hawk, the pigeon-breasted, the raven cunning, the cuckoo invasion, and the dove-like innocence, as human qualities and belongings. Brilliant and overdressed women suggest cockatoos, and swan like necks and ducks, "dear little ducks," are common enough phrases. Why ducks, the most phlegmatic and unromantic birds, should have been chosen for a term of endearment, is past finding out. We are not like them, let us at least hope, when we become affectionate.

—

IVY leaves are evidently a relic of Bacchanalian sports, for to the god Bacchus the ivy was sacred; the holly and the mistletoe are Druidical, especially the latter, which, being a mere parasite growing upon the oak and other trees, was gathered by the chief Druid, cut by a golden sickle, and carried in a procession with great pomp. It was once supposed to have wonderful curative properties, and especially the power to gift a blind person with sight. Thus Loke, the wicked god in the Scandinavian mythology, gives the blind Heda an arrow formed of mistletoe, by which Balder is slain. The growth of mistletoe on the oak is now, we are told, extremely rare; but science has found a way of propagating it by crushing its viscous berries in clefts of apple trees; and thus are obtained the huge and luxuriant bunches sold in England. Abroad it is a greater favorite for decoration for halls, parlors, and windows, than it was as a sacred plant with the Druids; it is banished, of course, as many other pleasant things are banished, from the drawing-rooms of society and the "upper ten;" but in the middle and middle-lower classes it still holds its own, and has the magical power of making a snatched kiss no rudeness—when the young lady is not unwilling, and the gentle swain knows how to approach the fair one properly and adroitly.

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How we catch cold, says the Lancet—a pertinent question—is just now engaging attention. The fact is, there are probably as many diverse occurrences grouped and confounded under the generic title of cold-catching as diseases covered by that popular term, fever, which is made to comprise every state in which the pulse is quickened and the temperature raised. By a parallel process of reasoning "cold" ought to be limited to cases in which the phenomena are those of a "chill." When a person catches cold, either of several morbid accidents occur. 1. He may have such a chill of the surface as shall drive the blood in on the internal organs and hamper some weak, or disorder and influence some diseased viscus. 2 The cold may so impinge on the superficial nerves that serious disturbance of the system will ensue, and a morbid state be set up. 3 The current of air which causes the cold may in fact be laden with the propagating germs of disease. 4. The vitality of the organism as a whole, or of some one or more of its parts, may be so depressed by a sudden abstraction of heat that recovery may be impossible, or a severe and mischievous reaction ensue. The philosophy of prevention is obviously to preserve the natural and healthy action of the organism as a whole, and of the surface in particular, while habituating the skin to bear severe alterations of temperature by judicious exposure, natural stimulation by pure air and clean water, and orderly habits of hygiene and health.

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THE art of drinking wine at dinner is said to be unknown save in Bordeaux, France. "The butler," writes a French correspondent, "with a serious air announces on pouring it, 'Chateau Giscourt,' 'Dascombe,' or 'Margaux of 1849.' The guest silently takes the glass between his thumb and forefinger, raises it to a level with his eye, and with a slight movement of the elbow gives the liquid a rotary movement. This sets free the aroma. He sniffs the perfume circulating on the edge of the glass, looks at the ruby color scintillating in the glass, then drinks it off deliberately in small instalments. Silence follows; the guests look at each other; the host has an anxious air, awaiting the verdict; then opinions are given in turn in a serious tone, and the wealth of adjectives at the command of a Bordelais is revealed. If the judgment is unfavorable the wine is declared rebellious, hard, soulless, disagreeable, hateful, contrary, imperious; and I heard my neighbor, a man of weight and wit, describe the wine as dumb. If, on the contrary, the judgment is favorable, eyes sparkle, and the wine is styled amiable, gracious, seductive, passionate, elegant, rich, proud, beautiful, grand, sweet, perfumed, insinuating, coquettish, ravishing, incomparable, full of love. 'But, madam,' said I to the lady next me, 'since your husband gives such adjectives to wine, what does he use to you to express his affection?' 'Well,' she replied, 'he calls me Lafitte, 1848.'"

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PECULIAR people are found everywhere. At present there is a lady living in a Western city who has eaten a pound of candy daily for weeks past. About a year ago, after suffering from a severe attack of typhoid fever, she developed a sudden fondness for raisins. She bought them by the pound and the box, and she has been known to devour two pounds of raisins in a day. After a time her taste changed to confections, and now she eats them day and night, on the car, at the opera, and even in church. She buys only the finest and most expensive, and never eats less than a pound a day. There is a man 58 years old, who has resided in the same city ever since the first street-car was started, and yet he has never entered a car. In rain, snow and heat he jogs along, meeting and being passed by cars, but nothing can drive him into becoming a passenger. There is a man now living in Detroit who has for years kept two men and two women servants, and he has always insisted that the men should be black-haired, and the women should be red-haired. It is said that years ago he passed a black-haired man and a red-haired girl walking arm-in-arm, and during the next ten steps he picked up a wallet with a large sum of money in it which was never claimed. His good luck brought with it the whim that he now indulges. Near at hand lives a middle-aged man who will not speak to a gentleman wearing a stove-pipe hat. Once, after sending for a doctor for his wife, he refused to let the physician enter because he had a silk hat on.

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A WORD on the textiles formerly in vogue. Some as yet have not been described, such as the Rasdumoros, the Armozeens, otherwise called Armazine, a species of strong corded silk, spoken of as early as the reign of Elizabeth, and employed both for men's waistcoats and women's gowns until the reign of George III. Some little idea of a lady's wardrobe about the middle of the last century is supplied in a list of what a waiting-maid stole from her mistress, the occupant of a small house in Pall Mall. We quote verbatim: A mingled colored wrought tabby gown, or deer-color and white; a black striped satin gown, with four broad bone black silk laces; and plain black watered French tabby gown. Also one scarlet-colored and one pink-colored sarcenet petticoat, and a white watered tabby waistcoat, plain; several sarcenet, mode, and thin black hoods and scarfs, several fine Holland shirts, a laced pair of cuffs, and dressing; one pair of pink-colored worsted stockings, a silver spoon, a leather bag, etc. She went away in a greyish cloth waistcoat, turned; and a pink-colored paragon upper-petticoat, with a green tammy under one. Just at about the same time a leathern portmantle was lost either at Sittingburn or Rochester, when the king went there, belonging to one of his gentlemen in waiting. The contents of this portmantle consisted of a suit of camolet Holland, with two little laces in a seam, eight pair of white gloves, and a pair of doe's leather; about twenty yards of skie-colored ribbon, and a whole piece of black ribbon; a cloth lead-colored cloak, with store of linen, a pair of shoes, slippers, a monters, and other things.

IMMORTAL.

BY ALICE I. MCAULEY.

The flowers bloom—
  Decay becomes their blight;
The day doth dawn—
  It endeth with the night.

Time's waves roll on—
  It's ages swiftly flee;
Man's life is given—
  His mandates cease to be.

But, oh! the soul
  No time or tongue can blight—
Can quell its being,
  Or can stay its flight.

Born to immortal life,
  Immortal still to be;
In heaven or hell
  It spends eternity.

Then look thee, now,
  Unto thy spirit's worth,
And balance well
  The weights of heaven and earth.

Then let thy soul
  Unfettered choose its way
To never-ending gloom,
  Or everlasting day.

Under the Holly.

BY RIENZA.

IN a quiet out-of-the-way little Kentish town, hard by the quaint old church, stood a great, gloomy-looking mansion, which seemed even in the brightest sunshine to bend a forbidden, prison-like frown upon all who chanced to pass beneath its shadow; and, to tell the truth, there were not many who troubled themselves to provoke the grim old building's frowning propensities, for its owner was a stern haughty, grey headed, shaggy-browed misanthrope, who proved a bugbear of sufficient enormity to check any undue familiarity with its massive, lion-headed door knocker, which, with the exceptions of announcing the arrival of the postman, and a few tradespeople (who were, of course, privileged visitors), reposed upon the iron studded hall door in such a state of otherwise undisturbed tranquility that it had become fairly rusted into its unsociable, creaking sockets.

Sir Marmaduke Sternhold, owner and tenant of the aforesaid mansion, had been a colonel in the army in the old fighting times when George the Third was King. He belonged to that school of unreasoning and uncompromising martinets who consider that any one possessing the unpardonable temerity to dispute their commands, no matter how absurd and impracticable such mandates may be, is guilty of a crime immeasurably more atrocious than high treason; and thus it was that at the age of sixty-five the despotic old knight found himself the solitary, wifeless, and comparitively childless, inhabitant of that big, gloomy wilderness of a house. His tyrannic rule and miserable temper had worried his gentle, sensitive and meek-souled lady into her grave some fifteen years prior to the commencement of our tale, and the merciless exercise of his favorite iron rule of military discipline had goaded his only surviving child his daughter Mary, a joyous, blooming, high-spirited girl of twenty, to escape from the thraldom of her cheerless home by rebelling against his parental authority and espousing the curate of a neighboring parish, whose great and unpardonable defect in Sir Marmaduke's eyes was that of being a peace loving and, worse than all, a charitable man.

When the young clergyman first sued for the hand of Sir Marmaduke's daughter, the old knight was more than half inclined to regard his suit with a favorable eye; for although he cordially despised his preachings of peace and good-will towards men, there were two redeeming points in his favor: he was a scion of a good and ancient family, and he had brilliant prospects (in a pecuniary sense) looming in the future. When, however, a rumor reached his ears that the curate's morning rambles were devoted to kindly calls and charitable ministerings among the sick and sorrowing poor, his anger knew no bounds; for he believed in nothing save the *prestige* derived from wealth and an illustrious descent, and the despotic power imparted thereby to rule and tyrannize over the small fry of the human shoal. Consequently, he at once commanded his daughter to drop so degrading a connection, and to think no more about the parson.

Mary, however, had inherited a portion of her father's non-succumbing spirit; and finding expostulation and entreaty of no avail, she had adopted the questionable, but, under the circumstances, perhaps natural alternative of following the bent of her own inclinations, by marrying the object of her choice in defiance to her parent's mandate to the contrary.

It is almost needless to say that Sir Marmaduke was furious at this piece of domestic rebellion on the part of the only member of his family for whom he had ever evinced one spark of human kindness. So he determined thenceforth to shut himself up like an ogre in his den, in that lonely old house, with no other companionship than that afforded by the occasional presence of a deaf housekeeper of four score, and a crusty old footman, who was also groom and gardener.

On the Christmas Eve of which our story treats Sir Marmaduke Sternhold sat moodily in his musty old library, an unenviable personification of a domestic Robinson Crusoe. Around him were piled up a heap of antiquated heavily-bound books which, if an accumulation of dust be any criterion whereby to judge of long disuse, had remained undisturbed by the encroaching fingers of the curious bookworm for many a bygone year. The only cheerful object in that gloomy apartment was the glowing fire, which blazed and crackled merrily in the capacious chimney-place. A reading-lamp with a green shade occupied the centre of the massive polished oak table, and cast its subdued rays down upon a large, time-stained sheet of military plans and diagrams, over whose tracings the grim old warrior pored as eagerly as if that night had been the eve of an eventful battle, instead of being the precursor of that joyful anniversary of the holy time when, eighteen hundred years ago, an angel messenger proclaimed upon the plains of Bethlehem the truth of a peaceful Shepherd to the fold of Christendom.

Sir Marmaduke, at the head of an imaginary army, had just succeeded in making a grand movement against his enemy upon a visionary field of action, and had paused, with a grunt of triumph, to wipe his gold spectacles and consider the probable effect of a new disposition of his forces, ere he struck a decisive blow of victory and annihilation, when the door of the apartment swung almost noiselessly open, revealing the withered, though not unpleasing features of the old housekeeper, amidst the partial gloom.

"A Merry Christmas to you, Sir Marmaduke!" cried the ancient dame, as hobbling up to the table she deposited thereupon a covered silver tray, and removing the snowy napkin therefrom, exhibited a mince pie, smoking hot from the oven, adorned with its orthodox sprig of holly, flanked by a steaming tankard of elderberry wine, the rich aroma of which speedily impregnated the atmosphere of the library with a spicy, grateful fragrance, which must have astonished the patriarchal spiders in their mouldy nooks and corners.

Something nearly approaching the shadow of a smile of satisfaction flitted momentarily across the knight's wrinkled visage, like a transient sunbeam struggling through the murky clouds of a Winter's day, as his eye fell upon the dainty fare.

Like all other members of the human family, Sir Marmaduke had a weak point or two in his composition; one of them being a decided partiality for mince pies and hot elderberry wine. That predilection had clung to him from his earliest schoolboy days up to manhood, had followed him closely in his downward journey to old age, and went far towards proving that, after all, there was one plastic spot still to be found in that living rock of adamant.

For a wonder old Margery, the housekeeper, was a woman of a very few words. On this occasion, however, she was even more taciturn than usual; for having passed the accustomed and stereotyped compliments of the season to her master, and supplied his present needs, she retreated as fast as her legs would carry her, with a peculiarly knowing smile upon her countenance, to her own room, there, in companionship with the footman, to regale herself with her own just proportion of Christmas fare.

Sir Marmaduke was alone again, and he had just quaffed his first goblet of the fragrant cordial, and was preparing to explore the richly stored recesses of his Christmas pie, when, as he removed the tray, prior to commencing operations, his eye was arrested by a letter which had lain concealed beneath the dish.

"Oh, ho! disobedience of orders; a mutineer in the garrison, eh!" he growled, as he savagely broke the seal and shook out the folded sheet. "Mistress Margery, you confounded old traitress, you shall smart for this, or my name's not Marmaduke Sternhold!"

For a moment the incensed speaker sat gazing into the fire, as if more than half inclined to commit the offending epistle to the flames unread; then, drawing the lamp towards him with a jerk, he betook himself to a perusal of the contents, which ran as follows:

"MY DEAREST FATHER,—If any amount of mental anguish and heartfelt sorrow can atone for a daughter's disobedience, I have surely endured enough of poignant suffering during the past eight weary months of estrangement from you to justify me in repeating my too often rejected prayer for forgiveness. It is in vain that my dear husband lavishes all his wealth of affection upon me; there is an aching void in my heart which naught can banish save the restoration of a father's love.

"Dear Charles joins with me, heart and soul, in this my urgent appeal for pardon. Do not, I beseech you, permit this holy Christmas-tide to witness the refusal of the boon we crave. To night we have resolved to revisit my old home together, and sue for permission to throw ourselves at your feet. Admit us, then, to your presence, and bestow upon us that parental blessing which can restore peace and happiness to your once rebellious but now truly repentant daughter,

"MARY GOODWYN."

"Indeed!" snarled the old iron-hearted warrior, tearing the letter, and deliberately crushing the fluttering shreds into a shapeless mass between his lean, sinewy fingers. "Very penitently—very romantically written, upon my word! And so, madam, you fancy that a few months of loneliness may have transformed Sir Marmaduke Sternhold into a poor, weak, credulous dotard, do you? Ha! ha! I wonder now, whether I look like it at the present moment. I rather doubt it. What a pity it is that young folks cannot bear in mind the adage which warns them that old birds are not early caught with chaff—it would often save them a world of useless trouble. I'm an old bird, my graceless little rebel—a very old one; and I mean to verify the proverb."

So saying, he hurled the compressed fragments of his daughter's mutilated appeal into the flames; and, with a grim, relentless smile flickering over his hard and withered features watched their ignition and exit in charred, sparling flakes up the yawning chimney.

As the last feathery remnant of the consumed letter vanished from his sight, the old man was startled from his vindictive reverie by the somewhat discordant strains of an asthmatical clarionet playing a simple prelude; and anon a chorus of childish voices arose from beneath the library window, chanting a homely carol.

"Tush! there it is again," growled Sir Marmaduke, shifting testily in his chair as the voices reached his ears. "The old, worn-out text of that confounded parson's milk-and-water sermons—peace and good will; faith, hope and charity! Ay, ay, screech away, you rapscallions! I'll be bound that you'll screech yourselves hoarse as croaking ravens before you'll wheedle a sixpence out of the pocket of Sir Marmaduke Sternhold. Only to think of a scion of our ancient and noble house—of a girl with the blood of the Sternholds flowing in her veins, mating herself with a pale faced curate, who, with a paltry pittance of some two hundred a year, has the consummate impudence to set himself up as a paragon of virtue by affecting to be charitable! When it comes to this, it is surely time that we, the legitimate possessors of rank and fortune, should turn our backs upon such gross, presumptuous pretenders!"

Here the old soldier paused in his soliloquy from sheer want of breath, for he had worked himself up into a towering passion, and snatching up the silver knife from the tray before him, he sought to relieve his choler by aiming a series of cuts and thrusts at the sprig of holly which decorated the Christmas pie, as if that had been his deadly enemy, and the author of all his vexations and annoyances.

Having thus in some degree relieved himself, the amiable old gentleman threw down the knife with a force that went very near toward rendering the crystal goblets footless, and replacing his spectacles upon his nose, essayed a re-perusal of his favorite military diagrams. A few minutes, however, sufficed to convince him that his faculty for study had somehow received a very violent shock.

Gradually—almost imperceptibly—a feeling of drowsiness, that was neither slumber nor wakefulness, yet partaking of the elements of both, crept over him, and presently all his faculties became absorbed by the consciousness of a flood of pale, wavering light pervading the sombre apartment, and shedding a rapidly increasing brilliance around him.

Confused and puzzled by the strange and unaccountable effulgence, he turned his heavy eyes mechanically toward the table, where a vision so mysterious and startling in character met his gaze that he sat powerless for speech and motion, from the effects of sheer astonishment and awe.

Mingling with the rich, aromatic steam which still rose in dense, curling wreaths from the mouth of the wine tankard, he discerned a countless host of strange, diminutive, shadowy forms, which, mounting upwards, twined their lithe, vapory limbs into every conceivable variety of fantastic evolutions; now floating momentarily in mid-air, on delicate, rainbow tinted wings—then alighting, like myriads of gorgeously spangled butterflies, upon the massive oaken table until its broad, polished surface was literally covered with an innumerable, ever-increasing swarm of pigmy elves.

Anon, sweet, joyous strains of fairy-like music were wafted through the chamber; and the mystic throng, forming a glowing, gem-like throng around the Christmas-pie, blended their tiny silver-toned voices in a chiming chorus of celestial melody.

A lambent flame, which hovered in quivering wavelets over the surface of the pie, shed a soft effulgence upon the magic scene, and while the elfin minstrels sang their carol of enchantment, the sprig of holly, as if influenced by some potent spell, rapidly increased in size—now towering upwards, then shooting out berry-clustered branches on every side, and speedily assuming the form and dimensions of a gigantic Christmas Tree.

Anon, the harmonious chant of silvery voices ceased, and with a merry shout of triumph, the nimble-footed sprites plunged into the magnified depths and richly-stored recesses of the pie, speedily returning laden like honey bees with every kind of fare, with which they mounted into the boughs of the marvellous tree, and swarming out amongst the glistening, dark-green foliage, loaded each drooping spray with luscious fruits and viands, meet for the celebration of the glorious and hallowed celebration of peace, good will, ungrudging hospitality and joy.

Sir Marmaduke sat riveted in his chair with speechless wonder, bending his fascinated gaze upon the ever-varying phases of the unearthly drama which was being enacted before him: His interval of speculative tranquility was, however destined to undergo a speedy and very disagreeable revulsion. Ere long the spirits paused in their labors, and held a brief consultation, and their gesticulations plainly denoted that there was something of grave importance yet wanting to complete the arrangement of their mystic programme. Suddenly they raised a shout of hilarious acclamation, and pointing their tiny fingers towards the book case, rose upon their glittering pinions, swarmed along the dusty shelves, and tumbling the heavy, cobweb festooned volumes from their resting places, where they had evidently lain for years in undisturbed and ignominious repose, bore them away with the speed of thought to complete the miscellaneous adornment of the Christmas tree.

Sir Marmaduke, who had so long watched the freaks of the pigmy throng with calm philosophy, felt his blood rapidly approximating to fever heat when he saw them making such unwarrantable inroads upon the treasures of his library shelves. Like the dog in the manger, he deemed such proceedings flagitiously unjustifiable—burglarious, in fact; and he resolved upon interposing his authority, regardless of consequence, as master of his own house, goods and chattels.

But here Sir Marmaduke found himself decidedly at fault. He might just as reasonably have striven to lift the root under which he sat, as to have essayed to lift himself an inch from his arm chair. A ponderous, vice-like, invisible hand seemed to press him down with a crushing weight, rendering him as powerless as a child, and a cold sweat started out upon his forehead and trickled down his wrinkled, rage distorted face in icy drops, when he found that his trembling limbs refused to yield obedience to his will. He could only sit and gaze with impotent fury upon the unsanctioned transfer of his property, for even the power of speech was, for the time being, denied him.

There was one circumstance, however, which afforded him some degree of consolation. He observed that the pilfering pigmies studiously shunned all contact with his long and jealously treasured treatises on siege works and fortifications, passing them over as if they had been only so much waste paper or useless lumber.

Presently the strains of elfin music which pervaded the library were echoed from without. The lively notes of distant melody came floating on the still, frosty air, momentarily increasing in volume, until they swelled into a full, rich burst of harmony beneath the casement of the chamber.

Just then the clock in the steeple of the old church chimed forth the hour of midnight; and as the last stroke pealed loudly and clearly through the sharp, freezing, rarefied atmosphere, the little goblins, with another joyful shout, rose into the air upon their radiant wings, and clinging to the heavy damask curtains, formed a dazzling rainbow tinted arch above the window. Their shout was responded to by a hearty, ringing cheer from without. Then the dark window draperies were swept aside as by a rush of wind. A flood of intense, wavering, crimson light suffused the walls and grotesquely moulded ceiling of the room. At the same instant the casement was thrown open by unseen agency, and amidst the glare of many-colored torches a miscellaneous laughing crowd of intermingled wealth and penury, of kings, princes, peasants, mendicants, of youth and age—a vast assemblage, comprising representatives of every Christian clime and people, poured into the chamber, the walls of which seemed to dissolve and roll away in clouds of radiant mist, and gathered round the marvellous Christmas tree.

Then came a motley throng of fantastically dressed mummers, bearing in triumph in their midst a mighty throne of evergreens, upon which sat a patriarchal form with flowing silvery beard and hair. He was enveloped in an ample ermine robe, and wore upon his venerable head a crown of twisted holly, mistletoe and ivy, amidst the shining leaves whereof the clustering white and scarlet berries flashed like intermingled pearls and rubies around his benign and placid brow.

With jubilant "hurrahs!" and welcoming cries of "Hail to Father Christmas!" which made the roof-tree ring, the vast assemblage pressed eagerly forward to the great presiding genius of their revel, as descending from his leafy throne, he approached the richly laden symbol of the festive time, and responded to their joyous acclamations.

"Once more, my children, Father Christmas comes to receive and return your hearty greetings, your unaffected offerings of joy and welcome. Once again he comes among you to distribute and preside over the bounteous gifts—the genial sentiments and rejoicings of this thrice happy season. May the spirit of festivity and harmless mirth spread its bright pinions over every hearth and

home where revelry is blended with a devout, unboastful recollection of the great Founder of this hallowed festival. May the divine precepts of Him who gave his holy name to Christmas tide be made your guiding stars through this and every season of the coming year. Then be ye rich or poor, your names shall be inscribed upon the imperishable scroll among the true and faithful friends of Father Christmas Let open handhanded hosptality hold the seat of honor at your festive boards, and let the needy and houseless wanderer share the cup in which ye bid me welcome. I greet ye all—kings, princes, peasants, and beggars; and I would fain have all return my greeting. Now, gather round, my children, and let mind and body share alike these good gifts, meet for the celebration of this joyful anniversary of man's redemption. Let Sloth and Ignorance give place to Progress and Enlightenment; and when ye fill the cheering cup to pledge me round your blazing hearths be this your toast—'Peace and good will to all!'"

Another burst of acclaiming voices followed the patriarch's exhortation. Then the sprites were at their work again, bounding from branch to branch of the enchanted tree, and showering down the varied offerings in lavish profusion from the drooping boughs, among the merry, scrambling crowd beneath.

Sir Marmaduke alone sat empty handed amidst that genial atmosphere of flashing light and joy, unheeded by the shadowy throng that swept around him. He could scarcely realise that he had dwindled into such an insignificant atom of worthless mortality as just then he felt himself to be.

Ere long, the eyes of Father Christmas rested upon Sir Marmaduke with a searching and reproachful glance, which made him cower and tremble, as in accents of deep indignation, the patriarch demanded:

"And who art thou that comest to our Christmas gathering without some gift to swell our festive offering?"

A sudden, death like pause in the joyous bustle and clamor of the phantom throng ensued, and all eyes were turned upon the hapless warrior.

The brilliant, coruscating lights waxed dim and before the trembling culprit's tongue could frame an answer to the interrogation of the presiding genius of the scene, loud, thunderous voices pealed through the chamber, pronouncing the name of "Marmaduke Sternhold!" and "Marmaduke Sternhold!" seemed to roll in deafening dissonns from every point of the compass.

The utterance of that name acted as a withering spell upon the unearthly spectacle. Its radiant, fairy-like splendor faded out. The seraphic strains of harmony were hushed into a solemn and oppressive stillness. A depressing gloom settled upon all around. The only light of which Sir Marmaduke was now sensible was the cold, glassy stare of innumerable fixed and glaring eyes, gleaming out from white, spectral faces, and concentrated upon him with a terrible intensity which froze the stagnant blood within his veins, and seemed to transfix his very soul, as with a lance of ice.

Then again came those dread thunder voices crashing through his shrinking brain in boding, wrathful tones:

"Behold the oppressor of the poor, the champion of ignorance and strife, the enemy of peace, good will and Christmas bounty!"

Then followed a strange, inexplicable confusion of dull and weirdly startling sounds. Countless bat-like wings seemed to rush over and around Sir Marmaduke, while goblin voices jabbered in his ears. Cold, clammy faces pressed against his cheeks and forehead, and great, green, blinking fishy eyes and ghastly lips mocked and reviled him. A stifling, choking sensation overpowered his very faculties, and stopped his laboring breath. His over-laden chest seemed to dilate almost to bursting. Yet he was fascinated, spell-bound, crushed as it were by living forms of ice, and utterly bereft of speech and motion. Another moment of such dreadful torture, and he felt that he must have ceased to live.

Just then a solitary beam of rosy light flitted across his fading vision, and turning his starting eyeballs in the direction from whence the welcome ray proceeded, he recognised the patriarch, Father Christmas, standing by his side, regarding him with an expression more of sorrow than of anger.

With an herculean effort he burst from the agonising bonds which threatened his annihilation, and cast himself imploringly at the feet of the noble presence.

Instantaneously the scene was invested with all its pristine splendor. Again sweet strains of heavenly music floated through the air; and in obedience to a sign from the venerable patriarch, Sir Marmaduke humbly approached the miraculous Christmas Tree.

Then in calm, impressive accents, Father Christmas thus addressed him:

"I summon thee, Marmaduke Sternhold, beneath the shadow of this mystic tree, to receive a friendly admonition; and I warn thee to beware how what thou hast seen and heard this night affects thy actions for the future. The great and beneficent Giver of all good things has bounteously endowed thee with the power of largely benefiting thy fellow man. How hast thou, hitherto, applied that power? Why, like unto Dives of old, thou hast converted a blessing into a withering curse. Like the improvident and worthless servant, thou hast neglected to improve the talent committed to thy keeping, and richly hast thou merited the punishment awarded to that class of evil doers. Thou hast already reaped a portion of the barren harvest generated in thine own breast by the worthless seed thou hast sown in the shape of domestic estrangement, a lonely hearth, a feared and detested name. Flee, then, while time is yet vouchsafed thee, from the more terrible doom that is only waiting until thy cup of iniquity be full, to consummate thy doom. My children have branded thee as an oppressor of the poor—an enemy to progress and enlightenment—a worshipper at the altar of Mammon. In good truth, Marmaduke Sternhold, the poor have but little to thank thee for! No wonder that they shun the very shadows of thy dwelling. But thou canst yet amend thy errors, if thou wilt. Let then, the vision of this Christmas Eve bring forth the fruits of a speedy reformation, and give me proofs, when next I visit thy abode, that thou hast learnt how to esteem the poor but useful man—the lowly born perchance, yet worthy image of his Maker—far before the groveling, tinseled drone, who idly gluts his appetite upon the costly product of the working bee. Go, now, and take counsel from the guide whom I have selected for thee, during the remainder of thy journey through the vale of life. Give ear unto their gentle teachings; suffer the better feelings of thy nature to usurp the place of selfishness, of pride, and stoical insanity; and all may yet be well. Good bye!"

As the patriarch ceased speaking, two shadowy forms, which Sir Marmaduke had not before observed, approached, and knelt beside him; and as their radiant countenances beamed upon him, he fancied that their features, somehow, grew familiar. While yet he gazed upon them, a cloud of purple mist gradually enveloped him in semi-darkness. Anon the cloud was penetrated by a stream of ruddy, flickering light, faint at first, but rapidly expanding and brightening. Then the mist slowly dissolved, and, as it were, scales fell from before his eyes.

Lo, the scene had changed! The mystic tree, the phantom throng, the blaze of magic light and splendor all had vanished! The ruddy, flickering beam of light, beamed itself into his own brightly-glowing library fire. The two shadowy forms that still knelt beside him assumed the aspect and the substance of humanity, and in them Sir Marmaduke recognized the Rev. Charles Goodwyn, his presumptuous son-in law, and his rebellious daughter, Mary!

* * * * *

It was Christmas night, and a crowd had gathered in front of Sir Marmaduke Sternhold's mansion. The bells in the steeple of the old church were ringing out a joyous peal, and, in defiance of frost and snow, the good people of that usually quiet Kentish town persisted in feasting their eyes upon a sight which one and all regarded as a marvel.

Lights—ay, and bright ones, too—blazed merrily within the casements of that ancient Hall, and every now and then loud bursts of mirth and revelry burst forth and made the windows dance and jingle again in their rusty framings.

We have said that the astonished townsfolk persisted in feasting their eyes upon this marvel The marvel, however, was destined to culminate in a perfect miracle when the great iron studded hall door swung open upon its creaking hinges, and amidst a glare of ruddy light and shouts of merriment the footman appeared upon the threshold, staggering beneath the weight of a huge, steaming jug of hot spiced ale, while Sir Marmaduke, his blooming daughter, and the curate, together with a numerous party of jovial guests, brought up the rear.

But when all comers were invited to drink "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year" to Sir Marmaduke and his companions the public mind then yielded at once to a conviction that Sir Marmaduke Sternhold had at last gone stark, staring mad; indeed, there could be no further doubt entertained about the matter.

But if such were really the case, then the old warrior certainly showed a method in his madness, for it proved an enduring and decidedly beneficial species of insanity. At least thirty Christmas Days have passed since that eventful time; and every succeeding anniversary has borne away upon its genial wings a yet deeper impress of the old veteran's ungrudging bounty.

Sir Marmaduke's years now number well nigh a century; but with every returning celebration of the festive season he smilingly relates to the assembled guests the memorable and mysterious incidents of his vision under the holly, and cheerily quaffs a hearty bumper to Father Christmas, in grateful recollection of his timely warning.

Bouciault's yacht, the Shaugraun, afterward named the Henriette, has left Newburg, and her present owner, M. Say, will cruise along the Southern coast during the winter, accompanied by the steam yacht Nooya as a tender. The Henriette will then be sailed round the world.

SOME STRANGE EATABLES.

BY J. P. D.

CHEVALIER MORELET, traveling in Central America took up his quarters at an inn at Campeachy, where the best fare the country afforded was to be obtained.

On sitting down to his first dinner there he saw, occupying a conspicuous place on the table a dish of the nature of which he felt extremely dubious; and seeking enlightenment from the cook, learned it was the flesh of the cazone, a creature of which he had hitherto never heard

Strolling along the beach the same evening, M. Morelet observed a fisherman towing behind his boat some sort of sea monster, which he instinctively connected with the mysterious dish at the inn, and asked the man what fish he had got there.

"Don't you see they are cazones?" was the answering query.

"Cazones!" retorted the Frenchman; "they are sharks!"

"Why not?" quoth the fisherman; and the murder was out.

Anxious to avoid shocking the susceptibilities of strangers, the good people of Campeachy have banished the word "tuberon"—Spanish for shark—from their vocabulary, and serve up the cruel monster as "cazone;" eating it fresh and salted, roast, boiled, or fried, with such gusto that Mr. Morelet declares the "cazone" ought to be emblazoned in the arms of the city.

Some score or so of contributors to a French sporting journal dined one day upon the ham and heart of a lion, killed in Algeria. The flesh of the lion was found to be particularly firm and close-grained, like that of a horse; but, although pronounced palatable, it only achieved what is termed a *succes d estime*; while the heart, skilfully prepared with truffles, was unanimously voted tough and indigestible. In fact, the French journalists were not much better pleased with their fare than was Bruce, the traveler, when the guest of an Arab tribe, bound by vow to eat lion's flesh once every day, for the traveler found male lion-meat lean, tough, and musky in flavor; lioness meat a trifle fatter, and more palatable, and whelp-flesh the nastiest of the three.

Mindful that an unlooked-for pleasure is thrice welcome, Frank Buckel did not advise his guests on a certain occasion that they were about to enlarge their gastronomic experience; but when the soup had been disposed of, asked a famous gourmand sitting near him how he liked it.

"Very well, indeed," was the answer "Turtle, is it not? I only ask because I did not find any green fat."

Buckel shook his head.

"I fancied it had a somewhat musky taste—peculiar, but not at all unpleasant," remarked his neighbor.

"All alligators have," replied the host, "the caymen especially—the fellow I dissected this morning, and which you have just been discussing"

Half a dozen of the suddenly enlightened diners started to their feet, two or three slunk from the room and the rest of the meal was enjoyed by only a portion of the original company.

While pursuing his ocean researches on the coast of South America, Agassiz had occasion to visit a friend's house, and took with him a copper barrel filled with alcohol, in which he had placed a number of undescribed species of fishes, some of them entirely unknown to science, to preserve the collection till he had leisure to examine them. For safe keeping the barrel was put in the basement; but his friend's cook, of her own discretion, or rather indiscretion, emptied it of its contents, and fried the precious collection for the great naturalist's breakfast.

Too many cooks may spoil the broth; but one, if insufficiently instructed, will suffice to effect that untoward consummation. By simply neglecting to boil it in a cloth, Lord Malmesbury's French *chef* converted his plum pudding into that Christmas dainty's progenitor, plum porridge Princess Metternich becoming acquainted with the merits of rhubarb tart in England, had the plant grown in his Austrian garden; and when it came to its proper growth, gave a dinner party, in order to introduce rhubarb tart to Austrian gourmands Unfortunately, the Prince, instead of specially instructing his cook, merely ordered him to serve the rhubarb up dressed as it was in England Knowing nothing of English usage, the cook, selecting the largest leaves, served them as spinach, causing many wry faces to appear at the board, at which the English dish never again appeared.

Equally unlucky was Mr. Peabody when, having received a gift of ten ears of green maize, he determined to renew the recollections of his youth, and at the same time delight his American, and astonish his English friends by having it served in American style. Plates of butter and salt were set before each guest, and the host announced he was about to treat them to a most delicious American dish. Then entered the butler, bearing a large covered dish which he solemnly deposited in front of Mr. Peabody. In another moment he had whisked off the cover, and the expectant diners beheld a pile of corn-cobs. The banker gazed for an instant in utter horror and dismay, ere he found voice to summon the cook—a man who had never seen an ear of Indian corn in his life before—and demand an explanation. He maintained that he had followed his master's instructions to strip off all the outside before boiling; the truth being he had bettered those instructions by taking off not only the husks but the kernels as well.

An English traveling party passing, some years back, through Charlton, Massachusetts, gave the landlady at the inn at which they put up some coffee and tea to prepare unground. The dame had never set eyes on either till then, but was not inclined to acknowledge her ignorance; so, when the travelers called for their tea and coffee, she astonished them by announcing that the "yarbs" were done, but the "beans" would not boil soft.

Anything one eats or imbibes with pleasure to the palate, followed by no unpleasant after-sensations, should be taken for granted. It is courting discomfort to pry too curiously into its composition. Some forty years ago, the ship Governor Endicott arrived at Salem, Massachusetts, from India, and there landed several missionaries, who departed at once for Boston to report their arrival to the Missionary Board, leaving their belongings at the hotel. There they attracted the attention of a custom house clerk, who, noting the presence of a cask, suspected an evasion of duty, and reported the matter to the collector of customs. That official at once ordered baggage and cask to be sent to the custom house for examination and requested that the missionaries would give him a call as soon as they returned to Salem. The suspicious cask was taken into the custom-house yard, the bung knocked out, a proof-glass inserted to find out what kind of liquor was inside, in order to fix the duty on it. They all tasted—collector, deputy collector, naval officer, inspector, clerk, and a tribe of hangers-on. They drank it neat, they drank it with water, with sugar, with biscuits, with cheese, but could not agree what kind of liquor it was Bets were made; and it was finally agreed to leave the knotty questions to be decided by two absent inspectors.

The next day the missionaries arrived at the custom-house to have their baggage passed, all save the cask of liquor. "That must pay duty," said the inspector. "Would they inform him what spirit the cask contained?" The amused missionaries complied by telling him that when they left India they brought with them a pet orang-outang which, dying after thirty days' experience of sea life, had been put in a cask of rum for preservation. An explanation accounting for the peculiar flavor that had puzzled so many experienced tasters.

SERMON TO MAMMAS.—Declining ladies, especially married ladies, are more given, I think, than men, to neglect their personal appearance, when they are conscious that the bloom of youth is gone. I do not speak of state occasions, of set dinner parties and full-dress balls, but of the daily meetings of domestic life. Now, however, is the time above all others when the wife must determine to remain the pleasing wife, and retain her John Anderson's affection to the last, by neatness, taste, and appropriate variety of dress. That a lady has last-growing daughters, strapping sons and a husband at his office all day long, is no reason why she should ever enter the family circle with rumpled hair, soiled cap, or unfastened gown. The prettiest woman in all the world would be spoiled by such sins in her toilette. The morning duties, even in the store room and kitchen may be performed in fitting, tidy costume, and then changed for parlor habiliment equally tidy and fitting. The fashion of the day should always be reflected in woman's dress, according to her position and age The eye craves for variety as keenly as the palate; and then, I honestly protest, whatever her age, a naturally good-looking woman is always handsome, for, happily, there exists more than one kind of beauty. There is the beauty of infancy, the beauty of youth, the beauty of maturity, and, believe me, ladies and gentlemen, the beauty of age, if you do not spoil it by your own want of judgment. At any age a woman may be becomingly and pleasingly dressed.

M. S.

Some time ago an old man moved from Texas to this State, and after a little while professed religion and joined the church. On the following Sunday, when the contribution box was being passed around, he arose and said: "I regard it as my duty to do something for this church, since you Christians have done so much, and now I desire to show my self-denial;" and he pulled out a revolver and threw it into the box.

The clergy and the school trustees at Rushford, Wis., are at loggerheads because the latter provided a keg of beer at the raising-bee for a new school house. The ministers all preached on the immorality of the act; and the trustees published a card, defending it on the ground of economy arguing that three dollars' worth of beer accomplished more than could have been done with fifty dollars in regular pay.

BAROUSHKA.

A Russian Christmas Legend.

The following lines were suggested by a popular Christmas tradition in Russia, among the peasant population. "Baroushka" takes there the place of our Santa Claus, and is believed to be the beneficent genius who brings the Christmas-tide gifts to children.

Baroushka muses by her door,
The labors of the day are o'er—
Save that she yet must set aright
Her household for the coming night;
And gazing thus on heaven alone,
Each star, from out its mystic throne,
Sent thoughts like those upon its beams,
To mingle with her evening dreams.

Lo! who these three, who wend their way
To where she stands? Their rich array—
The gems that glitter, richly fair,
On robes of texture rich and rare—
Proclaim them men of high degree,
Whate'er their native land may be
The turbaned brow, the swarthy cheek,
A lineage of the East bespeak,
Where men have said, the Chaldean's eye
Could read in heaven our destiny
Slowly they came with princely mein—
A glittering caravan I ween!
Their camels laden with the myrrh,
And costly balm of Orient fir,
And fabrics rich in many a fold,
And frankincense and Ophir's gold,
If by the lamps dim, flickering rays,
That through Baroushka's casement blaze,
The dubious eye aright may scan
The freightage of this caravan.
"Say, who be ye, who thus benight,
Yet wander through the wilds to night,
Where ravening beasts, and fiercer men,
Find in the wilderness their den,
And hide them in their lairs by day,
But prowl, in darkness, for their prey?"

"Baroushka, safe the traveler speeds,
Whose lighted feet th' Almighty leads.
We are the Magi, who from far
Have followed still you guiding star,
Whose glorious beam, from days of old,
The Orient's seers have long foretold.
It is the star of Him whose birth
Shall bring glad tidings unto earth.
It is the Christ-child's natal sign,
That wondrous star, whose ray divine
Before us, through yon solemn skies,
Moves, till it lead us where he lies.
Baroushka, come! and with us flee
To worship His divinity."

"Wait ye," replied Baroushka, then;
"Wait but one hour, ye holy men:
My goods, my house, demand my care
One hour; and then will I repair
With you, to bow me at His feet,
And render there the worship meet."

Alas! The hour hath passed away!
Those princely Magians, where are they?
And where that wondrous guiding star
Which kindled o'er the heavens afar?
Only the night—cold, cold and dark!
Only the meteor's burning spark!
"Baroushka, in the book of fate
Thy doom is written 'Tis too late"
Who with the Christ-child would abide,
Must cast all earthly things aside
Who tarrieth when His call is given,
The kingdom may a third of heaven.
Forth to the night, Baroushka, go,
To wanderings dark of lonely woe;
Condemned, through long contrite tears,
And weariest search, through withering years
For Him whose call hadst thou obeyed,
Thou mightst have found where He was laid;
And, bending o'er the cradled rest
Of Jesus, been forever blest
Go, seek Him, if on earthly ground
He haply yet may e'er be found,
And grant thee, with a pardoning eye,
His blessing—and the power to die.
To die? to live! for, sin forgiven,
And Jesus found, death means but heaven."

Ages have passed—two thousand years!
Yet still, in sorrow, gloom and tears,
Baroushka lorn her sad search keeps
By every couch where childhood sleeps;
And on the eve of Christmas comes
Beside their rest in myriad homes.
'Tis said, with generous hand 'tis she
Who dresses aye the Christmas tree;
And fills the stocking to the brim,
At midnight, by the fireside dim;
And brings them gifts of toys and flowers,
To gladden still the Christmas hours;
Hoping that 'mid the myriad band,
The little ones of many a land—
She yet may find that priceless gem,
The Christ-child, God of Bethlehem.

H. FRANK TAYLOR.

Ellen Weston's Trial.

BY ELBERT STRONG.

"HALLOWE EN girls!" exclaimed Nellie Edwards. "Are we to sit quiet when just this one night of the three hundred and sixty-five, Fate lifts the dim curtain of the future to our wondering comprehension! No, a thousand times *no!* So my dear, puritanic Ellen, for once lay aside your scruples, and let us try what that mysterious future has in store for us,"—and the animated speaker threw her arms lovingly around Ellen's neck.

It was a dear old house where our friends were gathered, nestling among the Western hills. Ellen's grandfather had built it. Here Ellen's mother had opened her black eyes, and Ellen's own sweet blue orbs had first beheld the light. Dear, gentle, charming Ellen the idol of her father's heart (for the energetic mother had years ago closed her eyes and folded her restless hands in the last long rest). The one ewe lamb, patient noble, brown-haired Ellen.

It was autumn, and a cheery fire blazed in the open grate, throwing its fantastic shadows over the golden curls and perfect faces of the city cousins, Nellie and Minnie Edwards, who had come from New York to spend a few weeks ere the opening of the winter season, over the black hair and tall form of Albert Vollen Ellen's accepted lover, over the bonnie brown braids that crowned Ellen's own shapely head; over the quaint old furniture and pictures, lingering around the piano, and dancing into the dark corners.

"Just this once, my dear cousin, in honor of our grandmother's memory," still pleaded the coaxing tones.

"Well, Nellie, I've no objections, I am sure provided you wish it. Of course there is nothing in it. But as we are all sensible, and above the silly superstition, the amusement will be harmless. Let us adjourn to the kitchen. Cook has a good fire, and we will very soon settle our destinies."

"I pray you, fair ladies, do not doom me to solitude. I humbly crave permission to accompany you to the sibyl's haunts, that I, too, may learn somewhat of the good that Fate has in store for me," said Albert, as his laughing eyes sought Ellen's blushing face.

"Oh, knight of the woful countenance, our liege lady grants your petition. I see it by her smiling lips. So, forward march for the kitchen it is:"—and Nellie's silver laugh rang merrily through the clean, wide room as they entered.

The smouldering fire was soon crackling in the fireplace. The lead was melted and poured into water, where, after sputtering and hissing for a time, it assumed many and various shapes, causing much merriment. Then apples were eaten and the brown seeds counted, "one I love, two he loves," with blushes and smiles; and at last the crowning trial, naming chestnuts and placing them in pairs upon the coals. Ellen bent down over the coals to arrange the nuts properly, when an explosion suddenly took place, and, with a low moan, she fell back, tightly pressing her hands over her eyes.

The mischief-loving Albert had placed a percussion cap upon the hearth "to startle the girls," laughing in imagination at their terrified screams. But now, when he saw the result of his cruel trick, his lips grew pale, and raising the prostrate form in his arms, he cried passionately, "Darling Ellen, are you hurt? Speak to me, sweet one! Have I murdered her?" with an appealing look to the sisters, who stood in dumb, pallid terror beside him.

"No! no! Dear Albert, I am alive, but oh, my eyes! The pain is maddening. Please assist me to my room, and then go for a physician. I am afraid I am blind! Do not alarm father; but hasten, dear."

Carefully, tenderly they led her to her own quiet room, shaded the light, bathed the swollen eyelids, and then the cousins sat down to wait.

The physician came, a kindly, good man, and pronounced his verdict. Only one eye was injured, but that so severely that it must remain curtained in night.

"Oh, doctor, do not say that!" wailed the sufferer but it was so, and no human agency could remedy the mischief.

Her beauty was gone; and amid the agony, the thought that he, for whom *she* would have shed her life's blood (strange how much stronger is woman's love than man's), might look with aversion upon the face he was once so proud of, made it still harder, and so there was a great sob in the voice that said, "Not that, doctor—oh, not that, doctor! I cannot bear it."

But heaven is merciful, and her heart did not break—not even when heartless Albert so readily accepted the freedom she offered him. He was *proud*, and could not for a moment think of marrying so very plain a woman as Ellen Weston with one window to the soul shaded. Weeks of pain she passed in the darkened chamber, and then came once more among her friends—pale, but, oh, so sad and sweet that one could almost weep to see her. Her father would gaze upon her altered countenance, and in his heart cursed the cowardly hand that caused the blight. But no one ever heard Ellen murmur; and when they brought her the paper recording the marriage of Albert Vollen with Nellie Edwards, not even a repining word mingled with her good wishes.

Years have passed, and Ellen is thirty. Calmer, sweeter, more lovely than of old, art has in a great measure remedied the defect in her beauty; and there are those who will tell you to-day that in all New York there is not one *young* face so handsome as Ellen Weston's. Old Farmer Weston went to join the wife he loved some years ago, blessing his daughter with his latest breath. Golden-haired Nellie has long since joined the angel-band; and Albert, with his four loving little girls, came back to his native place soon after. He saw our Ellen, and his old love revived; but she refused to listen to him.

Said she, "I think I buried my love for you twelve years ago to-night, when you so gladly severed our engagement. I can never be aught else to you save a friend. *That* I will try to be; for, with all your selfishness, I do not hate you."

He went away then a sadder and, let us hope, less selfish man. For a time he was angry, and would not permit his daughters to visit the farm-house, but after awhile his ire passed away; and though *he* never darkened the door yet four little golden-haired girls think "Aunt Ellen" is perfection itself.

This country eats one-third of the Turkish opium crop.

New Publications.

Among the many delightful books of travel which are to be found in the list of winter publications, is Mr. Frederick A. Ober's Camps in the Caribbees, or the Adventures of a Naturalist in the Lesser Antilles, which has been published in an attractive volume by Messrs. Lee and Shepard, of Boston. The journey was made under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institute, having for its object the study of the ornithology of this little island group, to accomplish which Mr Ober departed from the beaten track of the tourist, and wandered through regions of mountain and woods unknown to the ordinary traveler. He has compiled a charming description of his wanderings and experience with the people; and, with the simple, unaffected style in which it is written, it will prove a very fresh and entertaining book of travel. It is well illustrated and attractively bound. For sale and received from Lippincott & Co. Price, $2 50.

Mr. Arthur Gilman has added to his literary novels a book of selections, the subjects of which are well worthy of the care and skill in which they have been compiled. It consists of various passages from Shakespeare, which furnish an illustration of that poet's conception of morals. The subjects are arranged in their proper classification, and are accompanied by appropriate quotations from other writers and brief scriptural references. The idea is a unique one, and has been very artistically carried out. It is handsomely bound and printed by Dodd Mead & Co., of New York. Price, $1 50.

The latest addition to the "No Name" series bears the original title of "His Majesty Myself" and is more a delineation of human natures of strangely opposite characters, than a picture of sentiment or romance. The story opens with the arrival in America of a Scotch boy, who by pertinacious industry and economy, becomes rich, and brings to his home two sisters, one who is his own unemotional counterpart, and the other his pet and boyish idol and a beauty. The latter marries a Southern planter, and the former a hasy going but unsuccessful New Englander. Each had a son whose characters are strongely opposite. In time they pass under the care and control of their rich uncle, who worships success only. The story is chiefly based on the antipodes of nature, shown in the characters of the two nephews. It combines some pictures of college lifes, and the prominence and fall of a fashionable church in a large city in which the foibly of a sensational preacher are well portrayed. The character sketching shows a skilful hand, and they are very cleverly woven together in a story of peculiar originality. Published by Roberts Bros., of Boston. Price, $1 00.

Amid the flood of holiday books for young people, a good old fashioned story book will be hailed with delight, and Mr. R. W. Raymond's Merry-Go-Round will certainly satisfy the most fastidious boy or girl, for it has not only its full share of outside decoration and spirited artistic illustration, but its contents fully sustain Mr. Raymond's well known genius for story telling. The stories are full of graceful fancies, and that genuine touch of nature children realize and love, and at the same time embody the best of good sense and unobtrusive teachings. There is not a story in the book that will not bring wholesome enjoyment to any boy or girl, and it will be one of the welcome gifts in many a home this season. The Merry-Go-Round is outwardly a very attractive book, with its solid gold back and fanciful gold and ink side-stampings; and its contents—bright with fun and fancy, and solid with sterling good sense—will bear out the promise of its looks. For sale by Claxton Remsen & Haffelfinger. Price, $1 50.

Miss Lillian Clark has very gracefully introduced us to the writings of Ferdinand Gregorovius, the well known German author, in a translation of his charming description of the Island of Capri. Published in an attractive little volume, by Lee & Shepard, of Boston. The graphic descriptions are so vividly drawn, that they enable the readers to see through the author's eyes all the charms of the island. For sale by Lippincott. Price, $1 00.

MAGAZINES.

The January number of Appleton's Journal contains a variety of notable articles. Opening with the first part of a brilliant novelette from the French of Victor Cherbuliez, entitled A Stroke of Diplomacy. The conclusion of the story will be given in the February number. It is the purpose of the proprietors, we are informed, to give a succession of novelettes, running from two to three numbers, in preference to the customary long serials of the magazines. A Stroke of Diplomacy is brilliant and unique as may well be expected of anything from the pen of Victor Cherbuliez. An article on the Letters of Charles Dickens, just published with copious extracts is eminently readable. A collection of strange legends from the folk lore of all lands, pertaining to the myth of Cinderella, is a capital paper from the pen of W. R. S. Ralston. Mr Gladstone as a Man of Letters is considered. Dinners in Literature is the title of a curious paper, which traces the various forms of dining as illustrated in ancient and modern literature. What is Religion? forms the topic of a most elegant and suggestive paper, one which believers and sceptics alike would find profoundly interesting. There is a paper by Matthew Arnold on Poetry, and Mr Irving's Shylock; and the editor has for his topics the Proposed Federation of the British Empire, The Spiritual in Art, and Adorning the City. The contents of this number are uniformly of sterling value and interest.

The Christmas number of the World of Fashion is fully up to the standard of the initial number. It contains a large diagram sheet of the latest fashions and fancy work, and its general contents are of the greatest variety and interest. Hunt & Co., publishers.

ACCORDING TO THE CODE.

IN a French duel the duties of seconds occupy much space in the Count de St. Thomas's indispensable volume. As a rule, of course, they must prevent their principals from meeting and making it up. But if one of the duelists is of no skill with his weapons, while the other is a master of the foil or pistol, we gather that the seconds may try to arrange matters even on the ground. They should not allow either party more than a minute to aim, but a wounded man is allowed two minutes, after which he is out of the game. A quarter of an hour's delay on the ground is quite grace enough to give an unpunctual duelist. If a fight with sabre or rapier, no one should be permitted to parry with his hand; it is as illegal as the *coup de botte* or "leg before wicket" in England. The old school of fence permitted the use of a dagger in the left hand, for parrying. In sword duel, the seconds are armed with big sticks to enforce their decisions. In fighting with pistols the distance between the parties should be 15 paces. M. Gambetta fights at 30 or 40 paces, it is more statesmanlike. The pistols should be equally strange to both parties. The length of barrel must be the same in both weapons. When once on the ground the principals bow politely; that is all they have to do till the seconds have completed their arrangements. The seconds must feel the bodies of the men to see that they carry nothing which might break the force of a bullet. Some one fought a banker once, and hit him in the waistcoat, without satisfactory results. The banker had been struck in a portmonnaie full of gold, and his adversary congratulated him on "the skillful investment of his money." After both parties have promised to comply with the articles of battle, the second says, "I warn you that at the word *armez* you must cock your pistols, and that your honor forbids to fire, before I say *fires*." The men are then placed, the word *armez* is given, and after a few seconds, *fires*. The combatants fire in succession; the first has a minute in which to aim, and the second a minute after the other pistol has gone off—two minutes, if he is hit. This is the manner of the stationary duel. It really seems as if the combatants must generally be rather nervous, for it might be thought next to impossible to miss an object the size of a man at 15 paces with a minute allowed for aiming. The duel *au signal* we recommend to peaceful souls averse to bloodshed. From 25 to 35 paces separate the opponents. The signal to fire is given by one of the seconds clapping his hands thrice in half a minute. In this duel the principals fire simultaneously, and it is rather a snap shot at best. To fire too soon or too late is to commit a felony. If one man has fired and the other reserves his fire the seconds must run between them. A pleasing duty this for disinterested friends of the parties.

Lovely woman, if thou wouldst always be lovely, listen to the counsel of the Comptesse de Dieuanville, in the 'Almanach du Savoir Vivre:—"When you are past twenty five," she says, "never let more than five or six hours pass without closing your eyes for a short time—say ten minutes, not necessarily to sleep but to repose the muscles of the eye. Every movement and play of the face necessarily tends to fatigue these muscles—whether it be a smile or the expression of surprise or of fixed action. The closing of the eyelids at intervals is therefore recommended as a 'beauty rest.' The muscles, reposed, lose their tendency to that nervous contraction which translates itself into wrinkles."

When the Rev Phillips Brooks on Sunday morning told his congregation that a new organ was much needed for the chapel of his parish, that congregation did not pause to discuss the matter, but as soon as the service was over subscribed the needed sum, $1000.

In 1850 THE "BROMFIELD TROCHES" were introduced and from that time up to the present their success in Colds, Coughs, Asthma and Bronchitis has been unparalleled. No household should be without "BROWN'S BRONCHIAL TROCHES," as by their early use most troubles of the Throat induced by cold can be overcome.

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This primarily, is what Warner's safe Nervine is. The great man is one of the most famous living physicians. He found a harmless remedy for all kinds of pain, others improved it, and the final result is the Safe Nervine now manufactured only by H. H. Warner & Co.

Our Young Folks.

WILLIE'S OFFERING

BY PIPKIN.

THE flush and the glory of a September sunset were gilding the downs, while the stubble fields below lay silent in the ruddy light, wrapped, as it were, in a great peace, like a pure conscience after a deed well done. Silent, save for the occasional shouts and rippling laughter of the merry cricketers on the downs, which the wind wafted now here, now there, with the thistle down which fell without noise or tumult. Thistle down and idle words, circling and falling, the weeds to spring up, a pest to the sowers of good seed, the words—ah, the words! Would they live to work good or evil? They were a merry, rollicking party, those young cricketers on the sunny downs; it was no great match being played, but only a skirmish, as the lads themselves termed it, between the town eleven and the eleven of one of the surrounding villages.

One lad there was who was doing wonders, both in batting and running, a real dragon at the game, his companions and the by standers pronounced him to be, as he sped hither and thither, as with winged feet, over the yielding turf, and wielded his bat so skilfully and well. Well, the game sped on—now the village lads cheered for Willie Brand, whose champion he was, now the applause was for the town.

"He's a famous runner, isn't he?" said one lad to another, as Willie Brand flashed past them.

"Yes, very well for a clodhopper, as Edwin Grant says," was the reply of Jack Green, loud enough for Willie himself to hear, as he took his place again at the wicket. The boy's cheek flushed, but he neither turned nor spoke, his eyes were watching the movements of the ball.

"Not Edwin Grant?" said the first speaker.

"Yes, Edwin Grant. One day when I said Willie Brand was a clever chap, he said, 'Yes, very well for a clodhopper.'"

"But I thought they were such chums!"

"Pooh! chums! Edwin looks down upon him, chums or not. He pities him, and his mother gives him victuals for charity, that's all. Edwin makes no secret of it," so spoke Jack Green.

Willie Brand gave no word or sign that he heard, save by the pallor of his cheek, but the iron had entered into his soul. It was a good thing that the game was well nigh played out, for the boy's legs performed no more wonderful feats in running, the very bat in his hand seemed spiritless as it met the ball. He gave a sigh of relief when it was all over, now he could think of what had been said. They had all gone, his wild, happy, careless companions—he could hear their laughter as they swept down the hill side; the sunset glow had faded and vanished, like the gladness from a human life, and he was alone on the silent downs, with the wind sighing around him and the thistle down still floating in the valley below. He threw himself on the turf and burst into a fit of passionate sobs and tears. He was but eleven; we can forgive his weakness.

"Edwin Grant to talk like that of me," he sobbed, "and he must have said it, or why should Jack Green have spoken as he did?" It was very bitter to think of it. Edwin, whom he had loved as his own soul, loved as Jonathan had loved David! Edwin Grant, who had held out a friendly hand to him when he had come a stranger to the village with his poor ailing, hard-working mother! And when that dear gentle mother had died he felt that he should have died of grief also, if Edwin had not clung to him with his boyish sympathy. True Edwin was a shopkeeper's son and he only a poor farm lad, but his father and mother had been respectable, and he himself intended to climb step by step up the social ladder, he was trying even now to be noble, good, and true, though only working on a farm and living with Betsy West. So he resolved to cast out Edwin from his heart. And he did pass Edwin by day after day when they met, and Edwin wondered and begged for a reason for the change that had come to him, which the other never gave, and the village wondered, and Mrs Grant wondered at the broken friendship. I suppose Jack Green did not join in the general wonder.

Late in the autumn the tidings went abroad among the lads at the Sunday school where the two boys attended, that a chorister was to be chosen from their midst to fill up a gap in the choir of the minster church. Six chorister boys, by an old endowment were to be supported and educated to sing the praises of God there, and chosen from among the respectable poor of the town or its neighborhood; thus it had ever been since, perhaps, the minster was first built. And many a poor lad with a sweet voice had looked forward to being a chorister, and in vain, for all could not be chosen, only one here and there; some must be disappointed.

Willie Brand's heart beat high as he heard the news, his was a sweet, pure, ringing voice, he knew; so was Edwin's. They had both talked and dreamt, in the old days, of such a thing happening as one of them being chosen for a chorister; and now, if this great joy and blessing were to be his, it would be his stepping stone to position, fame, all his ambitious soul craved for. What if Edwin craved the same? What was Edwin to him? Nothing, he told himself—nothing; he had scoffed at his poverty, he, Edwin, his once idolised friend. At Christmas the choice of the sweetest singer was to be made; the time swept on apace.

But there came a Sunday, just before Christmas, when the text at the minster church was—"When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His son." And Willie heard the words of the preacher, towards the close of the sermon, as if it had been an angel speaking: "And ought we not to lay down our lives even as our Great Example laid down His? Yet not, perhaps, our lives; in these peaceful days few are called upon for this sacrifice; but may we not lay down our loves, our hopes, something dear to us as our lives, for the good of some one, not a friend, for this would be easy service, but for an enemy, and so walk in the very footsteps of our great Lord, the Lord of Christmastide."

Poor Willie rushed away after service to be alone with the thoughts struggling to be heard. "Leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps." The very robins in his path homeward seemed to chirp these words to him, the very wind whispered the same in his ears.

After that Sunday a great conflict went on in the boy's soul. He knew he should stand a chance of being chosen for a chorister—nay, more, there was almost a certainty, one and another of the heads of the school had told him as much. Should he go in and win, or should he give it up for Edwin's sake? Edwin was hoping to gain it, as he was, he had heard the boys talking of it. But a little thing decided the question for him. He was standing, silent and sad, looking out of the window one evening at home, the shadows were gathering, and here and there a snowflake was falling fair and pure, like the heralds of Christmas. Now they alighted on the ground, now they beat against the window, as if pleading for something, so Willie fancied. His great question was troubling him, for the time for decision was very near. If he gave up the bright hope without a struggle he must be content to be a clodhopper perhaps for ever. The sweet music of the minster bells came stealing up to him, and now the voices of little children, singing in the village in spite of the snow, wandered by like a gush of music.

"Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die."

Willie started; was not his being a chorister his glory? Ay, it was—his very soul thrilled and yearned; could he lay it by? He bowed his head and wept; but he made a noble resolution: he would go and have his voice tested; but he would lay down this glory, this life joy, if offered him, for Edwin's sake and the great Master's.

The snow fell that night and the next day the earth wore its Christmas robe of purity to welcome the Lord of the pure and meek, but Willie never faltered in his resolution. True, his dark eyes were wistful and tender as he went hither and thither through the snow with the horses which loved him but knew nothing of his trials and sorrows, and the world never knew the great, noble, earnest promptings throbbing at his young heart.

The trial was over, the decision made; no need for Willie to lay down his glory his life joy, the lump in his throat prevented his clear young voice from rippling out its sweetest: Edwin Grant was chosen. Edwin with so much love and joy, without this crowning Christmas gift. But Willie, pale and trembling, was glad as he glided away, the church bells still telling of Him whose life was a sacrifice—ah, yes, Willie was glad. Out, away to the shadow of the old minster he strayed—how peaceful it was there among the graves of those who had once hoped, longed, and laid down their cherished schemes as he was laying his down.

"Willie!"

"Edwin!" The two once friends stood together, their hands met in a warm clasp, while tears sprang to their eyes. Then followed explanations and Edwin told how Jack Green had twisted his words to work evil and how he had mourned over his friend's estrangement. And once again the love bonds knit them together. But Edwin kept his place as chorister and next year Willie was chosen, so the joy crown came at last to Willie's life and this also he laid at his Saviour's feet with gladness as a most holy thing, his Christmas offering to be taken up and joyed over, even in after days when he poured out his whole soul in melody.

A strange relic has just been presented to the State of Arkansas. It is a white leather belt with the imprint across it of a bloody hand. It was worn by Colonel Archibald Yell, who fighting desperately on the field of Buena Vista, got a fatal wound, and in trying to tear away the belt left red finger marks. Colonel Yell was the first Congressman from Arkansas.

The latest estimate of Jay Gould's wealth is $65 000 000, and Jay is a young man yet.

Cerebrations.

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No. 318.

H
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DARES
DELUDES
CALAMINES
HARUMSCARUM
DEDICATES
SENATES
SERES
SUE
M

No. 319. THE SURRENDER OF CORNWALLIS AT YORKTOWN.

No. 320.

POLACCA
OCULARS
LUXATES
ADAMEDA
CATERER
CREDENT
ABBARTS

No. 321. TAMARIN, LEATHIS, TERMITA.

No. 322.

S
MAD
HEROD
HADAMAR
MEDICINAL
SARACENICAL
DOMINATED
DANITES
RACES
LAD
L

No. 323. THROWING THE TEA INTO BOSTON HARBOR.

No. 324.

PETALED
RAVELED
REGALES
RETIRER
REVIVAL
REVERED
REREDOS

No. 325. LOATHE.

No. 326.

P
PEN
HARAR
DERIVER
FANATICAL
DEMOGOGICAL
SERRATES
SENITES
SITES
CID
S

No. 327. NUMERICAL.

The WHOLE composed of 9 letters is a shield bearer.
The 1, 2, 3 is melancholy.
The 4, 5 is a coin.
The 6, 7, 8, 9 is the foot-print of a horse on the ground he goes over.

Lebanon Church, Pa. O. C. O. L.A.

No. 328. TRIPLE ACROSTIC.
(To "Skeesiks.")

FIRST Charles of Navarre
Married SECOND De Har
So I've heard
And when it was done
They took from a tun
A great THIRD
This let out the wine
Of the beautiful Rhine.
Thereupon
They PRIMALS them down.
The bride in a gown
Made of sawo
And then did they dine
And drink of their wine
Until four
But then (how absurd!),
A FINALS was heard
At the door
PRIMALS FINALS came in,
As if he had been
Lord of all.
And though he was chief
Of the province of Gleph,
That was small.
The company then
Of ullery clan men
Put him out.
And he went in a boat
To Mount CAYENALS in Crete,
("The old spot!")
The feasting resumed
The bridegroom was "boomed"
And the bride,
But at quarter past ten
The ninety nine men
Did divide.

Newark, N. J. APOLLO.

No. 329. CROSSWORD.

In "thirty-four diamonds" but not in "Et Pen,"
In "Wilkins Micawber" but not in his pen.
In "Baltimore city" but not in New York,
In "shoulders of bacon" and therefore in pork.
The last is in Dickens' productions, wherefrom
The "NOMS" of most parlors undoubtedly come.
What's the TOTAL? In a word
It is—well it is a bird.

Baltimore, Md. ARIAN.

No. 330. DOUBLE ACROSTIC.
(Four letter words.)

1. To agitate. 2. The length of two ells of linen. 3. A disease of the hair. 4. Certain measures. 5. A genus of reptiles.

PRIMALS—A tool. FINALS—Herbage. PRIMALS and FINALS—The Dutch rush.

Boston, Mass. GREBRENNEWS.

No. 331. ANAGRAM.

MONKEY GAMES TAME HERO.
A proverb find when this you read.
A truthful one it is indeed.

M'Clintown, Pa. SANCHO PANZA.

No. 332. SQUARE ACROSTIC.

SQUARE.

1. A sorcerer. 2. A town of Naples. 3. A precious stone. 4. A nun of the order of St. Clare. 5. A light brown color.

PRIMALS and FINALS—An American shrub.

ENCLOSED DIAMOND.

1. A letter. 2. A copper coin of Switzerland. 3. A mineral. 4. An ancient Roman diety. 5. A letter.

New Haven, Conn. O. POSSUM.

No. 333. CHARACTERISTIC INITIALS.

1. Persevering Soldier.
2. Moral Leader.
3. Base Arbitrator.
4. Acquitted Blackguard.
5. Augustan Poet.

Philadelphia, Pa. PEGGOTTY.

No. 334. SQUARE.

1. An old French coin. 2. The outer membrane of the grains of pollen. 3. Long bars. 4. A sharp quick sound. 5. To join. 6. To search again.

Gibson, Pa. OBADIAH.

No. 335. DOUBLE CROSSWORDS.

Found in mast but not in will,
Found in shot but not in kill,
Found in cloud but not in sky,
Found in chance but not in try.
Found in shale but not in brick.
Now find the answer if you're quick.
A precious stone 'twill bring to mind
Related to the agate kind.

Fort Clark, Texas. GAMMEW.

No. 336. SQUARE.

(With compliments to Waverly.)

1. A village in Scotland. 2. A product [illegible] from distillation of bone. 3. An Italian pudding. 4. A builder. 5. A toll paid the mint for coining. 6. Little white balls found in ant hills. 7. Closest.

Sedalia, Mo. EF PEN.

No. 337. CHARADE.

While walking down the street one day
A man who had a "SECOND"
FIRST quickly to another man
Who at the corner beckoned,
"What did I get?" the first man said,
"Not much just as I reckoned,"
The second then would you believe
Began to WHOLE the SECOND.

Parsons, Kansas. CAPT. CUTTLE.

No. 338. DIAGONAL SQUARE.

ACROSS 1. Household images. 2. A reptile. 3. Linear. 4. Impure. 5. Like a strap. 6. A concave molding. 7. Acicular rutile. 8. Pertaining to an island in the Pacific ocean.

DOWN. 1. A letter. 2. A musical syllable. 3. A mound of earth (PROV. ENG.). 4. A village of Naples. 5. A mean fellow. 6. A Russian measure. 7. A genus of plants. 8. To reduce to synopsis. 9. To vie with. 10. To have bearing. 11. Winged. 12. A male nickname. 13. A dog-fish. 14. A corner. 15. A letter.

New York City. JARBY.

ANSWERS NEXT WEEK.

PRIZES FOR SOLUTIONS.

1. The POST six months for FIRST COMPLETE list.
2. The POST three months for NEXT BEST list.

SOLVERS

Cerebrations of November 15th were solved by Dick, J. C. M., Odoacer, A. Solver, Y. M. A., Ben, J. Min, Fiery Ann, Alec Sander, O. Possum, A. L. Bert, Grebrennewj, Peggotty, Will Wimble.

COMPLETE LISTS—Dick, J. C. M., Odoacer, A. Solver.

PRIZE WINNERS.

1. Dick, - - Waverly, R. I.
2. J. C. M., - - San Francisco, Cal.

ACCEPTED CONTRIBUTIONS.

Goose Quill—Progressive Diamond, Double Crosswords, and two Numericals. Traddles—Charade, Triple Crosswords, two Double Crosswords, two Numericals, and two Anagrams. Jarge—Charade. Peggotty—Charade and Logogriph. Grebrennewj—Two Diamonds, A. L. Bert—Square and Acrostic—Effendi—Two Numericals.

LITTLE LETTERS.

GOOSE QUILL—Progressive Diamond just the thing. Send along more of the same kind. When do you sail?

TRADDLES—The best we ever saw. How in the "name of common sense" do you grind out such good ones.

PEGGOTTY—You are creating such a stir among the Boys, that we have great difficulty in concealing your address.

GREBRENNEWJ—The brace of Diamonds received, but we have mislaid the Latin Proper name one, and don't seem able to find it.

A. L. BERT—Square O. K., but, we must tell you candidly that unless there is something unique about them—Acrostics have no charm for us.

EFFENDI—You have sent your last Numericals to the place they will do the "most good" viz—Cerebrations. When you do shoot, you generally hit something.

YOU KNOW WHO—A Geographical name such as NEW FRANKLIN will not pass to an Hour Glass for this Department and, we may as well remark here, that Octagons CANNOT be made of 8 letter words; while Diamonds containing Adjectives with S added, will surely seek their proper level in the Waste Basket of

WILKINS MICAWBER.

Hard times in Berlin have led to dog-stealing and dog-eating by the hungry poor. Many families are in mourning for their favorite pugs and turnspits—the varieties of dogs most affected as domestic companions by Northern Germans—which have fallen victims to their too tempting obesity and appetizing sleekness. Plump terriers, also, have mysteriously disappeared in considerable numbers.

LET IT PASS.

BY A. F. B.

Be not swift to take offence;
Let it pass!
Anger is a foe to sense!
Let it pass!
Brood not darkly o'er a wrong;
Which will disappear ere long;
Rather sing this cheery song—
Let it pass!
Let it pass!

Strife corrodes the purest mind;
Let it pass!
As the unregarded wind,
Let it pass!
Any vulgar souls that live
May condemn without reprieve;
'Tis the noble who forgive.
Let it pass!
Let it pass!

Echo not an angry word;
Let it pass!
Think how often you have erred,
Let it pass!
Since our joys must pass away,
Like the dewdrops on the spray,
Wherefore should our sorrows stay?
Let it pass!

If for good you've taken ill;
Let it pass!
Oh, be kind and gentle still!
Let it pass!
Time at last makes all things straight;
Let us not resent, but wait,
And our triumph shall be great;
Let it pass!
Let it pass!

Bid your anger to depart;
Let it pass!
Lay those homely words to heart;
"Let it pass!"
Follow not the giddy throng;
Better to be wronged than wrong;
Therefore sing the cheery song—
Let it pass!
Let it pass!

BENEFIT OF CLERGY.

SOME persons may have become familiar in the course of their reading with the phrase, "Benefit of Clergy," without acquainting themselves with the origin and importance of the words. These frequently occur in old legal records, and in the general history, profane and ecclesiastical, of past times, when they had a deeper significance which an insight into their meaning will enable me to appreciate.

Their origin may be traced to the regard which was paid by the various princes of Europe to the Church, and to the endeavors of the Popes to withdraw the clergy altogether from secular authority. The earlier kings after the Conquest resisted this ecclesiastical assumption, as an interference on their prerogative, but the result was only partial: one instance being the exemption of places consecrated to religious purposes from arrest for crimes, which led to the institution of sanctuaries; and also the exemption of clergymen in certain cases from criminal punishment by secular judges; from this came the benefit of clergy. It was then necessary that the prisoner should appear in his clerical tonsure and habit at trial, but in course of time this was considered unnecessary, and the only proof required of the offender was his showing to the satisfaction of the court that he could read, a rare accomplishment except among the clergy previous to the fifteenth century. At length all persons who could read, whether clergymen or lay clerks (as they were called in some ancient statutes), were admitted to the benefit of clergy in all prosecutions for offences to which the privilege extended.

The following was the rule for administering the test: The bishop must send one with authority under his seal, to be a judge in that matter at every jail delivery. If the condemned man demandeth to be admitted to his book, the judge commonly giving him a Psalter, and turneth to what place he will. The prisoner readeth so well as he can; then the judge, asketh of the prisoner's commissary, "Legit ut clericus?"—"Does he read like a clergyman?" The commissary must say "Legit,"—"He does," or "non legit,"—"He does not read." If he say legit the judge proceedeth no further to sentence of death; if he say non, the judge forthwith proceedeth to judgment. It appears that the clergy regarded with some jealousy the extension of the privilege to any but of their own order.

As may naturally be supposed, means were taken to defeat justice by cramming an illiterate criminal sufficiently to pass the ordeal. This was, however, an indictable offence.

For the ordeal of the "benefit," the fifty first Psalm was generally selected, and the opening words, Miserere mei Deus—"Have mercy on me, oh, Lord!"—came to be considered what we popularly term the "neck-verse," par excellence. It appears, however, that the Scriptures might be opened at any place.

In Hudibras there is an allusion to the practice of singing a psalm at the gallows; the criminal condemned to be hung who was unable to read a verse in the psalms was to sing, or, at least, hear a verse sung, under the gallows before he was turned off. The popular saying among the people was that that "if they could not read their neck verse at the sessions, they must sing it at the gallows."

On account of the many abuses which attended the practice of benefit of clergy, the subject was taken up in the reign of Henry the Seventh. But notwithstanding the attempts made to effect some radical changes in the law, it is curious that the practice of calling upon a convicted person to read, in order to prove his title to the "benefit," continued until the late period of 1826. From that date it was lessened and limited till the abolition of benefit of clergy to persons convicted of felony, was decreed by a statute passed in the reign of George the Fourth.

The immunities of the clergy in France, even to the period of the Revolution, were very extensive. The releasing of prisoners was one of these. The Bishops of Orleans claimed the right, on the diocese, of a general jail delivery at Orleans. The Bishops of Laon had the privilege of recalling from banishment persons belonging to their district. The chapter of Vendome delivered yearly a prisoner on the day of St. Lazarus. Every year on Palm Sunday the Archbishop of Embrun possessed for a long period similar privileges.

Conspicuous for its great antiquity was a custom among the ecclesiastics of Rouen, which partly resembles the "benefits of clergy" practiced in England. This was confined to Rouen in honor of its titular saint, and was called the Privilege de Saint Romain, by which a prisoner who had been sentenced to death was claimed at the annual fete of the Ascension by the chapter of the cathedral. Here, however, there was no pretence of the criminal being able to read, and instead of being consigned to imprisonment, as in England, he was led through the city in a solemn procession by the clergy and authorities, crowned with flowers and followed by an applauding multitude. The origin, according to tradition, arose from St. Romain, who was Bishop of Rouen in the seventh century, having miraculously preserved the city from the ravages of a frightful dragon. In honor of this, a King of France had, either in the life of the saint, or shortly after his death, accorded to the church of Rouen this peculiar privilege.

Grains of Gold.

Never be idle.
Never gamble.
Make few promises.
Always speak the truth.
Keep good company or none.
Drink no intoxicating liquors.
Live up to your engagements.
Never speak lightly of religion.
Be just before you are generous.
Never borrow if possible to avoid it.
Do not betray the confidence of anyone.
Abate two thirds of all the reports you hear.
Keep yourself innocent if you would be happy.
When you speak to a person look him in the face.
He who blackens others does not whiten himself.
Make yourself all honey, and the flies will eat you up.
It is but the little of man that seeth no greatness in trifles.
Superstition is but the fear of belief—religion is the confidence.
There are some minds which we must leave to their idiotism.
Human life is everywhere a state in which much is to be endured.
Virtue like a dowerless beauty, has more admirers than followers.
Zeal, without judgment, is like gunpowder in the hands of a child.
A thousand things are well forgot, for peace and quietness' sake.
A word spoken pleasantly is a large spot of sunshine on a sad heart.
Think always only of the best, and the good will very soon appear.
Know well your incomings, and your outgoings may be better regulated.
If you would have a faithful servant, and one that you like, serve yourself.
It is more profitable to look up our defects than to boast of our attainments
The heart—Nature's original bible scarcely to be recognized in the world's translation.
You cannot dream yourself into a character; you must hammer out and forge yourself one.
He who says there is no such thing as an honest man, you may be sure is himself a knave.
Good intentions never justify evil actions; nor will good actions ever justify evil intentions.
A good constitution is like a money-box—Its full value is never known till it has been broken.
There is no trait more valuable than a determination to persevere when the right thing is to be accomplished.
As the sword of the best tempered metal is most flexible, so the truly generous are most pliant and courteous in their behavior.
The sweat of one's brow is no longer a curse when one works for God; it proves a tonic for the system, and is actually a blessing.
Without a belief in personal immortality, religion surely is like an arch resting on one pillar, or like a bridge ending in an abyss.
A man has no more right to say an uncivil thing than to act one; no more right to say a rude thing to another than to knock him down.
When a man lives up to his best ideas of right, and that idea blesses his life and honors God, we would not advise him to change creeds.
Charity toward the weaknesses of human nature is a virtue which we demand in others, but which we find very hard to practice ourselves.
Do not allow yourself to speak ill of the absent one if it can be avoided; the day may come when some friend will be needed to defend you in your absence.
Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year. No man has learned anything rightly until he knows that every day in the year is doomsday.
Do not speak with contempt and ridicule of a locality where you have been visiting. Find something to truthfully praise and commend; thus make yourself agreeable.
Do not make a pretence of gentility, nor parade the fact that you are a descendant of any notable family. You must pass for just what you are, and must stand on your own merit.
Every incident of our lives contributes to form our temper, character, and understanding, and the mass thus formed modifies every one of our actions. All in man is association and habit.
The difference between those whom the world esteem as good, and those whom it condemns as bad, is in many cases little else than that the former have been better sheltered from temptation.
We can easily manage if we will only take, each day, the burden appointed for it. But the load will be too heavy for us if we add to its weight the burden of to-morrow before we are called to bear it.
Knowledge is not wisdom; it is only the raw material from which the beautiful fabric of wisdom is produced. Each one, therefore, should not spend his days in gathering materials, and so live and die without a shelter.

Femininities.

Small bustles have made their appearance.

Two sizes of buttons are used for most costumes.

Are shopping ladies apt to be called price fighters?

Love, like the plague, is often communicated by clothing and money.

Man is the thinking part of the community and women the feeling part.

Ill temper and smoke are about equal in their ability to drive a man out of the house.

If you have a scolding wife, trust to time; old age may bring you the blessing of deafness.

Young women should set good examples for the young men are always following them.

It was wittily said of a beautiful French literary lady, that she had but one fault—a husband.

A female celebrity has arrived in Monaco who goes by the odd name of the "Roulette Fiend."

There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, and not a few between the first kiss and the ring.

"Man proposes—women opposes," says a cynical bachelor, who probably never proposed in his life.

Scolding says a good for nothing old bachelor, is the pepper of matrimony, and the ladies are pepper boxes.

"Does your wife play euchre?" asked one. "No," replied the other, rubbing his head, "but she's death on poker."

What did the young lady mean when she said to her lover, "You may be too late for the train, but you can take a bus?"

The woman who has not time to mend her children's stockings is working night and day on a patchwork quilt for the next fair.

It is one of the advantages of women that not pretending to be logical, they can change front on the instant, when they see fit.

An amorous swain declares he is so fond of his girl that he has rubbed the skin from his nose by kissing her shadow on the wall.

A young lady attending balls and parties should always secure a female chaperone until she is able to call some male chap her own.

A poet out West, describing Heaven, says—"It's a world of bliss fenced in with girls." Where is the man that won't repent now?

Gloves with thirty two buttons are being worn in Paris for full dress, those with eighteen buttons being considered fit only for a demi-toilet.

The kind of strong-minded women to whom all men kneel in adoration is the wifely, motherly woman who insists on making home happy.

You may meet with twenty men in the day who stutter, but you never heard of the woman who had an impediment in her speech.

The woman who is exceedingly sweet to one's face and is very bitter behind one's back may be said to bear false sweetness against her neighbor.

There is said to be a fellow in a western village who is habitually so sleepy that his curiosity cannot be awakened. Such is not the case with his wife, however.

An editor headed a column of selections "Men and Things," and his wife mussed his hair under the impression that the last part of the heading referred to the other sex.

When a lady by accident discovers that her photographer has put her picture in his show case, she goes home and makes a terrible time over it, but doesn't order it to be taken out.

The Parisian papers are giving this bit of good advice to bachelors:—"Either marry a woman beautiful enough to live without a fortune, or one who is rich enough to do without beauty."

A young lady of New York who is partially deaf, is in the habit of answering "yes" to everything when a gentleman is talking to her, for fear he might propose to her and she not hear it.

A homely old widow dug up five thousand dollars in gold the other day, and now twenty young men sit on her doorstep at sundown and compare her physiognomy to the beautiful face of an angel.

Young ladies who wish to have small mouths are kindly advised to repeat this at frequent intervals during the day—"Fanny Finch fried five floundering frogs for Francis Fowler's father."

"The greatest source of weakness to every nation under heaven," said a philosopher, "comes from the fact of its women having so little to do and so much to say." That man is a crabbed old bachelor.

A belle says that most of the "men" met in the ball-room are "creatures" who can't talk, although they are preferable to the persons who tell about their personal likes, the kind of shoes and socks, etc., they fancy.

"Two ladies without any character!" was the bad announcement of a stupid usher at a fancy ball who had been told to announce persons in the character assumed, and who saw that the ladies in question were in ordinary attire.

A man in Indiana brought suit for a divorce against his wife, gained his case, and then applied to her for money to pay the expenses. She gave it to him, and in a fit of gratitude he offered to marry her again, but she declined.

A pastor preached a sermon entitled "Women vs. Birds" the other day, and since then many of the women in his congregation have refused to wear birds on their bonnets during the day church services, reserving them for the evening.

An old gentleman who has dabbled all his life in statistics, says he never heard of more than one woman who insured her life. He accounts for this by the singular fact of one of the questions on every insurance paper being "What is your age?"

The young lady inhabitants of the island of Hinis, in the Mediterranean, are not allowed to marry till they bring up from the depths of the sea so many sponges. Notwithstanding this sponging business, divers couples are united in the indissoluble bonds every week.

Lucetiæ.

Well handled—The pump.

Are stoves "grate inventions?"

Head quarters—A hatter's shop.

A play Bill—William Shakspeare.

Plain sewing—Planting on the prairies.

The embers of the year—Nov. and Dec.

A well known country—The oil regions.

Is a second hand watch necessarily an old one?

A bird on a bonnet is worth two on toast.

The seat of war—The base of a fellow's breeches.

A novel scheme—A proposition to write a romance.

A man is known by the company he declines to keep.

Can rivalry between churches be called a steeple chase?

A false charge—Putting in the wad before the powder.

No other living thing can go so slow as a boy on an errand.

This country wants no king—so long as it can get plenty of knaves.

Hens are very orderly creatures. It is seldom that they mislay an egg.

An egotist is one who makes a butt of himself by continually talking of his own exploits.

To cure deafness, tell a man you've come to pay him money. It beats acoustic oil all hollow.

As oysters come in with September, accurate people now class them among "fall openings."

Jones tried the dram-atic, but failed. He then sought the dram-seller, and is now a member of the bar.

Why, oh why, does the young man wear a high hat? Because it makes him more hat-rac(k)tive, you know.

It makes a fly's eyes stand out, and his legs stand in, to see the way winter is encroaching on his liberties.

People who take moonlight strolls on railroad tracks shouldn't be offended if the coroner doesn't recognize them.

When two young men meet they address each other as "old man," and when two old fellows meet they say "my boy."

A beer contest was a feature of a charitable fair in an Indiana town, each purchaser of a glass voting for his favorite brewer.

Why is a General like a flag? Because he has a staff. N. B.—The fellow who wrote this is not expected to live. Over-taxed brain.

Why is a man who has just carried his carpet-bag ashore from a steamboat like the soil? Because he is possessed of landed property.

A milkman makes an excellent candidate for office. Practice with the pump-handle enables him to shake hands without experiencing fatigue.

The correspondent who asks if there was ever a four-dollar greenback, is answered in the negative. Yet we once heard a man sing "The IV Green."

Medical man: "And then, with regard to the swelling at the back of your head, I don't apprehend anything serious; but you must keep your eye on it."

A country paper makes the following correction: "For 'It's a poor mule that won't work both ways,' in yesterday's issue, please read, 'It's a poor rule,' etc."

The young lady who worked a pair of slippers for her beau with the unique design of a coiled snake on each, doesn't go to the theatre at his expense any more.

An old gentleman in the upper end of the city says his boy is the champion light waiter of the country, for the gas in the hall is kept burning for him every night until after one o'clock.

A great philosopher says: "In the economy of nature nothing is lost. The inside of an orange may refresh one man, while the outside of the same fruit may serve as a medium for breaking another man's leg."

A coroner's jury lately added to a verdict, in the case of a not over-bright individual who was found drowned, the cynical remark that—"he never showed any penetration till he made a hole in the water."

An Illinois clergyman meets a heart-broken girl on the train; tells her there is a better land; supports her fainting form; helps her off at a small station, and finds his watch and $200 gone. Does it pay to be good?

A shirt has two arms just as pantaloons have two legs. Yet one is called a pair, and the other is only one. Isn't it time we let up on astronomy, and paid more attention to the every-day trifles that show the clearest mind?

The only consolation the average poet can realize from the wretched monstrosity the intelligent compositor makes out of his beautiful verses, is that after reading them death does not seem half so terrible to him as it once did.

A Jerseyman who survived five widows, all red headed, was, not long since, thrown 150 feet by an express train, when he picked himself up, looked around for his hat, and said: "Well, if I don't find that hat I'll make the company pay for it."

A gentleman met a stranger on the street, grasped his hand cordially, in tones of polite, but uncertain, recognition: "Mr. Brown, I believe?" "If you believe that," calmly replied the stranger, whose name was Hamilton, "you'll believe anything."

ONE COLD IS SOMETIMES CONTRACTED ON TOP OF ANOTHER, the accompanying Cough becoming settled and confirmed, and the Lungs so strained and racked, that the production of tubercles frequently follows. Many existing cases of Pulmonary Disease may be thus accounted for, and yet how many others are now carelessly allowing themselves to drift through the preliminary symptoms, controlled by the fatal policy of allowing a Cold to take care of itself! On the first intimation of a Cough or Cold, or any Throat or Lung Trouble, resort promptly to Dr. Jayne's Expectorant, a safe curative of long established reputation, and you may avoid the consequences of such dangerous trifling.

IT WAS NOT TO BE.

BY A. L. S.

IN the village of Linwood, towards the close of a beautiful May day in the year of 1870, a party of young people were playing croquet on the lawn in front of one of the houses. Leaning over the low fence, and watching the sport, was a young lady of twenty-three summers.

Tall and slender, with sharp, but irregular features, dark complexion, bright black eyes, and dark brown hair.

Presently two young men, who had just returned from a continental trip joined the company and took part in the play. One of them was Frank Burnham, a good looking young man of about twenty three. He and Eva Stanley had been schoolmates when children, and they renewed the old acquaintance; their friendship soon ripened into something stronger, and when Frank declared his love, it met an answering response.

Eva's parents were opposed to the match. The father—a hard, stern man, whose whole mind was concentrated on making money, thought Frank, who was poor, and had but few friends, no match for his daughter. Eva remonstrated, and with tears and entreaties begged her father to wait for Frank to rise in the world and make a future for himself. To this he gave a reluctant consent.

As time passed along, little obstacles were thrown in the path of the two by the father, which, though seemingly accidental, were in reality intentional, and calculated to place a barrier between them which could never be surmounted. At last Frank was obliged to give up his situation as bookkeeper for the firm of Lyons & Stanley. His discharge was due to Mr. Stanley's dislike.

After this Frank tried to obtain employment, but without success. For a year this state of things was kept up, and Eva was advised by her parents to give him up

At last, after many trials and temptations, a quarrel arose between the two, and they parted with bitter words and hard feelings

Another year passed and Frank and Eva were still strangers to each other. He was both ready and willing to forgive and forget She, although longing for a reconciliation that would bring them together once more, was kept from saying the words that would unite them, partly by her pride, and partly by the influence of her parents, who were doing all in their power to keep them apart

At last this life became unbearable to Frank, and he determined to go to New Zealand. Accordingly, one bright morning in April Frank Burnham and his special friend, Charlie Warner, started for Auckland. Before he left he bade Eva an affectionate adieu, and the past was forgotten for the time

The trip was an uneventful one, and the young men arrived safely and well. They at once commenced business, and fortune came almost without seeking, so that the firm of Burnham & Warner was known far and wide.

For three years the two friends continued to prosper and acquire wealth, with no one to enjoy it with them.

One morning the breakfast bell of their hotel rang as usual Charlie came down and seated himself at the table; he sat waiting for Frank some time, but he failed to make his appearance

"What can keep him so long?" thought Charlie "I will go up and see if he is asleep"

He went to the door of his room, and after knocking several times and obtaining no answer, called for assistance, and the door was forced open Frank was asleep, but it was the sleep that knows no waking On his lips was a smile, and in his hand was a picture of Eva Stanley, on which was written:

"It was not to be!"

So they buried him together with the picture and a package of letters which they found in his desk, and sent the sad news home to his parents and to Eva Stanley. Nine years have passed, but she still remains unmarried.

THEN AND NOW.—We are all apt to look upon poverty as about the worst ill which can befall us I do not mean the poverty which brings us face to face with starvation, but simply that want of means which makes existence a constant struggle. And yet how few of us there are who, having got on in the world, and being surrounded with every luxury that money can procure, do not look back to the days when every experience was an object to us as the happiest of our lives True, we were younger then, our hearts were lighter, and our spirits unsoured by long contact with the world; but it was not only that. Were our pleasures no keener, though simpler? Yes, our French neighbors wisely say, *il y a compensation in tout*, and even the poverty which seems so hard to bear has its redeeming points If we could but remember this, perhaps we should not exhaust ourselves mutually and bodily as we do now in our struggle to "get on" in the world. Again, when we are poor we are spared the many pangs and heart burnings which are caused us by our endeavors to vie with our neighbors. We know that they are so much richer than we are that we do not attempt it, and with a quiet mind. But as we begin to get on, as our incomes become larger, how many of us are there who can say with truth that we are superior to the pettiness of trying to outdo those around us? Your rich City man will do things he detests, and go to places he abhors, for fear somebody should think he could not afford it. I would not be understood to undervalue wealth, or the comforts and luxuries it can procure for us. I only wish to convince those who are still struggling and panting up the hill which leads to fortune, that perhaps when they gain the summit they may look back upon the toilsome road not without regret for the pleasant milestones they have passed, and so help them to that greatest of all earthly blessings—content. M. S.

CHRISTMAS LORE.

WE need hardly tell our readers that the word "Christmas" was derived from Christ and mass, a festival of the Christian Church observed on the 25th of December as the anniversary of the birth of our Saviour. Once Christmas was confounded with the Epiphany, and celebrated by the Eastern Churches in the months of April and May. It was instituted by Pope Telesphorus, who died A. D. 168. In the fourth century St. Cyril of Jerusalem obtained from Pope Julius I an order to investigate the subject of the day of Christ's nativity, and the result of the inquiry by the theologians of the East and West was an agreement on the 25th of December. The chief grounds of this decision were the tables of the censors in the archives of Rome.

According to ecclesiastical computation, the Christmas holidays commence on the 16th of December, and terminate on the 1st of February; but practically the festival begins on the evening before Christmas Day, and usually lasts until the Twelfth Day This season is a joyous one, abounding in merry making. We trace the origin of many of our Christian customs far back to the old Pagan rites and ceremonies. By the amalgamation of Christian and heathen rites, no festival of the Christian year was more thoroughly characterized than Christmas; the festivities derived from the Roman Saturnalia, and afterwards intermingled with the ceremonies of the British Druids, at the period of the winter solstice, became still later incorporated with the mythology of the ancient Saxon. Two popular observances certainly belong to the worship of our heathen ancestors—the hanging up of the mistletoe, and the burning of the yule log. In the religion of the Druids, the mistletoe was regarded with the utmost veneration when growing in the bark of the oak, the favorite tree of their divinity Tutumes—who was the same as the Phœnician god—the sun—worshipped under so many different names in olden times

On Christmas Day the ancient Britons, with their priests, the Druids, went with pomp and rejoicings to gather the mystic parasite. When the oak was reached on which the mistletoe grew, two white bulls were bound to the tree, and the chief Druid, clothed in white, emblem of purity, ascended the tree and cut the sacred plant with a golden knife, and the sprays were caught in the folds of the robe of a priest standing beneath the tree. The mistletoe was then divided among the people, who hung the sprays over the entrances to their dwellings to propitiate sylvan deities during the season of frost and cold These rites were retained throughout the Roman dominion in Britain, also under the sovereignty of the Jutes, Saxons and Angles. Therefore the special custom connected with mistletoe on Christmas Eve is an indubitable relic of the days of Druidism—we allude to the kissing under the mistletoe. The burning of the yule log, too, is an ancient custom transmitted to us by the Scandinavians, who at their feast of Juul, at the winter solstice, kindled huge bonfires in honor of their god Thor. This custom is still observed in some European countries

The Christmas tree seems to be a very ancient custom in Germany, and is probably a remnant of the splendid and fanciful pageant of the middle ages. That delightful innovation was introduced into England after the marriage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The Germans have also those legendary personages, *Kruh-Kingle*, the Christ-child, the rewarder of good, and *Pelznichol* or St Nicholas, the punisher of evil children These are sometimes represented as the same individual under different characters the prototype of which was doubtless the charitable St Nicholas.

We will merely refer to hanging up the stockings on Christmas Eve Some years ago it was a common custom; but now the Christmas tree has in some places entirely taken the place of the stockings for in many households all the presents, from parents to children, from children to parents from brothers, sisters, friends, and to servants, are placed either on or under the Christmas tree.

The English custom of singing carols in the early morning dates from the time when the people in general ceased to understand Latin; and the custom of decking houses and churches at Christmas with evergreens is derived from the ancient Druid practices. It was an old belief that sylvan spirits might flock to the evergreens, and remain unnipped by frost till a milder season. The holly, ivy, rosemary, bays, laurel, and mistletoe furnished the favorite trimmings, which were not removed till Candlemas.

A FORTUNE FROM CHEMISTRY.—It used to be said of a famous English geologist that he could tell by night in what part of England he was by simply tasting the soil. A little chemical knowledge of soils helped a peddler to a great fortune. The founder of the Larderel family one day took off his pack under the trees in Maremma Woods, and spread out his bread and meat for the noonday meal. While eating he fell asleep, and his bread and meat rolled down on the earth. When he awakened he picked it up and began eating. The first mouthful was so bitter that he could not swallow it. He found the cause was the earth in which it rolled. He, was an intelligent fellow, and his hobby was chemistry. He had a friend at Leghorn who was a druggist, and with whom he had studied out many a chemical secret. So the taste of the earth set his mind to work. He gathered a portion of the earth and put it in his pack. When he tramped back to Leghorn he and his friend examined the earth, and found his suspicions verified. It was full of soda and borax. The peddler took his savings and quietly bought the waste land in the Maremma Forest, set up his manufactories, and made a princely fortune. In one of the galleries of the splendid Larderel palace at Leghorn is a huge borax coronet, placed on a high gilt pedestal. Now, the grandchildren of the clever old peddler who sold matches, tobacco, brandy, etc., are mating with the descendants of Medicis, Salviatis and Savoy dukes.

News Notes.

Fountain foam is a new tint, a little paler than sea foam.

The Rothschilds have lately paid in England $150,000 probate, and $120,000 legacy duty.

A new slipper is cut very low, and fastened across the instep by a real gold bracelet.

Miss Braddon, the English novelist, is, in fact, Mrs. Maxwell, the wife of an English publisher.

Ruskin has after many refusals, many prayers, and many entreaties, consented to sit for his bust.

Thackeray enjoyed a good dinner. He was particularly found of American oysters and canvas back ducks.

Mrs. Parnell, mother of the Irish agitator, is generally regarded as the leading lady operator in Wall street.

Prince Leopold will shortly be made a duke, and, like his grandfather, take his ducal title from the county of Kent.

On Thanksgiving day Joseph Perkins, of Cleveland, Ohio, was 25, and came into possession of $10,000,000, the whole of his father's estate.

On November 17 numbers of persons were skating at Wimbledon, near London, on a lake surrounded by trees, most of which were still in leaf.

The Mormons within a year have made about 400 converts to their faith in Alabama and Mississippi, and have induced them to emigrate to Utah.

Mr Bancroft, when complimented by a correspondent the other day on his health, said the true secret of it was that he has always plenty to do.

Lord Derby is one of the wealthiest men in England, and as his income steadily increases, it is reckoned that his annual income will soon be $8,750 000

As there is no law to prevent killing fish in the streams of Georgia by exploding cartridges of dynamite under water, it is becoming a popular pastime.

An English tiger tamer died recently at Berlin from blood-poisoning caused by the bite of a fierce female tiger. His body was covered with scars acquired in his business.

There are but thirteen grist mills now running out of thirty costly ones that Rochester once boasted of. Fifteen of them are now used as manufactories of machinery, and two are cremated.

Sir Henry Havelock has been left a large fortune, but there is an awkward condition attached to it. He is to take the name of Allan in future in return for the sudden wealth thrust upon him.

The King of Saxony has offered a prize, open to all nations, to consist of silver plate, for the best scheme for rendering harmless to fish in rivers and lakes the refuse from factories and sewerage from towns.

A New Haven man smokes several cigars a day throughout every even year, but in the odd years not one from January first to December last. This is without inconvenience, and is a habit of fifteen years' standing.

Queen Victoria regrets that she cannot use the deaf and dumb alphabet now so fast as when she was young. Her Majesty learned the signs in order to converse with the daughter of a cottager near Osborne, Isle of Wight, several years ago.

A South Carrollton, Ky., father thinks his daughter too young to receive company, and locks the parlor door after tea, carrying the key out with him. Such a man as that ought to be arrested by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Under a South Carolina law which provides that money won at gambling shall, upon proof, be restored four-fold, a firm of Charleston has entered suit for $79,000 against the proprietors of two fashionable resorts, the amount alleged as having been lost by young men in whom the firm was interested.

A woman recently sold her baby in a barroom in Horsham, England, for $4.87, to a man who had taken a fancy to the child. He left the place with his purchase, but the woman followed him, snatched the infant out of his arms, slapped his face, and ran away.

One hundred and thirteen commemorative monuments have, within the past twenty years, been erected in various parts of Italy to its great poets, scientists, philosophers and artists of the past, and to the statesmen and warriors who aided in Italian unification.

Nellie Johnson, of St. Louis, is a diminutive woman who weighs only fifty pounds. Nevertheless, being insulted by a young man in the street the other day, she whipped out a pocket-knife, and plunged the blade into his breast. He escaped with his life only because the blade was a small one.

General Toombs is wealthy, having always enjoyed a lucrative law practice, and of late years having made occasional sales of Texas lands, 100 000 acres of which he bought in the infancy of the Lone Star Republic at fifteen cents an acre. Now he sells it at from eight to ten dollars an acre.

The Empress Eugenie has become almost childish with grief, and she carries about with her all day a small dagger-shaped fan bought at some fancy fair, and of no intrinsic value, which happened to be her son's last gift to her. She listens to all that is said to her, steadily regarding the flower-painting on the fan.

Hop Bitters have more patience than Job, curing thousands of patients daily. See Proverbs.

A St. Louis boy was delighted when a fine six-bladed knife dropped down to him apparently from the sky. Wrapped around it was a paper, on which was written, "We are fastened in the dome; for Heaven's sake help us out." Two girls had ascended to the top of the Court House, and closed a self-locking door.

Near Paris, Ky., a negro stole a hog. Not that this was anything unusual for Kentucky, but in order to carry it better he tied its feet together and put the loop thus formed over his neck. When he climbed a fence he slipped, the hog fell on one side of the fence, and he on the other. The man's neck was broken, and when found he was dead.

Rouse Up

The liver if it is dormant, and avoid a train of evils which must otherwise ensue. Among anti-bilious medicines none rank so high as Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. It speedily banishes those pains in the region of the affected organ, the yellowness of the skin, nausea, vertigo and sick headache, which attend a bilious attack. A bilious subject, after a brief course of this capital liver stimulant and invigorant, finds that his tongue is no longer furred in the morning, his breath is grown sweeter, a hundred inexplicable sensations no longer make his life miserable, his bowels have acquired the steadiness of a well regulated piece of mechanism, and he can eat with a hearty appetite and good digestion It is because the Bitters assist nature in her efforts to bring back the disordered liver and bowels to their normal condition, that it accomplishes such remarkable cures.

What They Say.

Rev. J. E. Rankin, D. D., of Washington, D. C., certifies of Warner's Safe Kidney and Liver Cure: "I do not doubt that it has great virtue." Rev. C. A. Harvey, D. D., Secretary of Howard University, certifies that for Bright's disease "no other remedy can be held for one moment in comparison with this." E. W. Neff, of Detroit, Mich., certifies that it completely cured him of a very serious chronic liver complaint. J. H. Sherlock, of Rochester, N. Y., certifies that it cured him of Bright's disease of several years' standing, and that he believes it to be the most valuable remedy ever discovered. These are samples of hundreds of other testimonials.

A CARD.—To all who are suffering from the errors and indiscretions of youth, nervous weakness, early decay, loss of vitality, &c., I will send a recipe that will cure you, FREE OF CHARGE. This great remedy was discovered by a missionary in South America. Send a self-addressed envelope to the REV. JOSEPH T. INMAN, *Station D, New York City*.

OFFICE OF THE LANCET,
NEW YORK, December 2, 1879.

This is to certify that I have used a lotion known as "Sapanule," and find it to be an excellent article for allaying inflammation.—ROBERT BONNAR.

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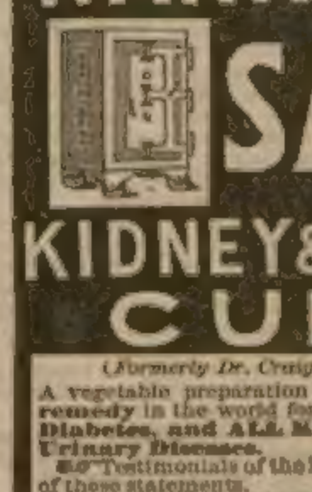

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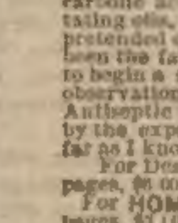

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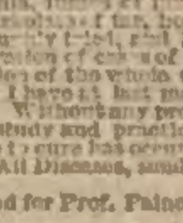

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Ladies' Department.

FASHION NOTES.

FOR full dress bonnets there are large Josephine and Directoire hats of ivory plush-like felt, bordered with gold braid, and ornamented in front with a large ivory plush bow, fastened down with a gold buckle, and tied with ivory-white strings. The white theatre bonnets are made of lace, point d'esprit net, a bright flower, a few gold spangles, and strings that call to mind the Spanish mantilla, so large are they; and they are usually fastened on the shoulder with a rose. Gold now plays a very important role in millinery.

A very pretty bonnet is of black velvet; the brim, which fits closely round the head, is quite flat, and is trimmed round with a row of jet; the remainder of the brim is embroidered with jet. The crown is encircled with a black velvet and satin pekin ribbon, with large Alsatian bow in front, and jet clasp in the centre. The strings are of the same pekin ribbon, and are embroidered at the edges with jet, like the ends of a cravat.

An elegant, yet modest, bonnet is of white satin, or felt, of the "Peg Woffington" shape. The strings are of white satin and gauze pekin. A white feather surrounds the crown, with a parrot on one side.

A very modest bonnet is of grey plush, with a twist of grey silk and satin pekin ribbon round the crown, and an Alsatian bow of the same material in front, with loops and ends so long that they nearly cover the crown. Strings of the same pekin ribbon. Very small Directoires are made of colored velvet to match the dress; their crowns are embroidered with gold or jet, and a braid to match lines the interior of the brim. Within the brim, on one side, is a small bird. Satin strings to match the velvet.

In large hats, I noticed the Frondeuse, which is of plushy felt, and has two immense black feathers round the crown, and joined together in the centre by a bright-feathered bird. The brim of this hat droops over one ear, and is very unique.

Although Parisian ladies do not like large hats, artists prefer them to small ones; and they are doing all they can to induce ladies to adopt yet a little longer the romantic Vandyke and Remorandt shapes, than which nothing is more becoming to youthful, pretty faces.

A Rembrandt of black velvet, with the brim lined with black feathers, and the crown also encircled with a rich and noble ostrich plume with three tips, falling over one side, is very handsome. A bird may also be added on one side to the interior of the brim; or a large bow may be placed on one side, or in the centre.

I now turn from millinery to warm, useful furs. Sealskin has at last to some extent been taken into favor by the Parisians, and our furriers have made preparations by laying in a good stock of dark rich seal jackets and cloaks. The jackets are but little altered from last year's shapes. They range from thirty-seven to forty inches in length; the front is double-breasted, and there is a collar that opens or rolls close to the throat, like a gentleman's coat-collar; there is no seam in the centre of the back, as that part is blocked over a form, but in other respects the shape follows the outline of the figure. Those jackets that are well cut with the fewest seams are the best to select, as the pile is apt to wear off at the joins, and the fur looks thin and rubbed in consequence. The shoulder seams are short, and the sleeves are sewn on high, which gives a masculine, yet jaunty, effect to the jacket. The lining is satin grec, a lustrous twilled silk that does not fray. Brown, to match the fur, is the general color, but crimson is newer and more cheerful looking. In purchasing a seal jacket, it is advisable to blow open the fur and stroke it against the pile, to be assured of its depth and velvety thickness; also that it is well colored to the pelt. The Alaska and Shetland skins are both at present shown by our furriers. The former are the strongest, the latter the finest, and there are very few of them. Untrimmed jackets are more popular than those bordered with another fur. The muffs are small, without tassels or bows, and they are usually made entirely of sealskin.

Fur-lined cloaks are shown in a variety of shapes this season. The best houses have designated these garments in long, slender, clinging shapes; also in long jackets, and as circulars. In selecting such a garment the purchaser should keep in view the probability that such draperies will be revived, and select an ample garment; for this reason many ladies are buying circulars instead of the newer shapes. Circulars are made with the deep Russian collar—hoods for passees—and may be either bordered or plain; if the sum to be expended is limited, it is better to omit the border and buy the best quality of silk and of fur. Cheap linings of fur rub off on the dress beneath them, and the low-priced silks soon become "shiny." Repped silk of heavy quality, Sicilienne, armure, and a new fabric called Messine, are all used for the outside of the cloak. Armure is liked because its figured surface does not get shiny. Satin de Lyon and plain satin are chosen for the richest cloaks. A new cloth used by Worth for such cloaks is wool on the wrong side, with silk on the surface ribbed like Terry velvet. This is trimmed with natural beaver, and has, besides, ornaments of passementerie, draped cords, large showy buttons, and panels of armure.

I have already alluded to the new painted lace worn for lingerie purposes. It is increasing in favor. It is painted by hand in cashmere colors and designs. Both black and white lace may be thus painted. Black lace is painted in Breton lace patterns and Japanese blue. White lace, especially that representing Mechlin patterns, is tinted by the brush, and is used for jabots, ties, caps, and handkerchiefs. The Indian muslin which accompanies these articles is also painted to match the lace, and the cambric for handkerchiefs is painted in the same way. I need not tell you that this hand-painted lace, muslin, etc., is already being imitated by manufacturers, who are printing lace, muslin and cambric in hand designs. Black painted lace will be used to trim black dresses. It will be a serious rival to beaded lace. Black Spanish lace is also much used for fichus.

A great novelty, which at present can only be obtained at one Parisian house, is the cuirass Veronese. This cuirass is of silk elastic material, manufactured expressly for this purpose, and having the appearance of heavy faille or glace silk. The secret of this waist is that it fits in to the figure over the bust and hips without a crease. It is worn without a belt. This is a most beautiful style, and will likely soon be in general favor.

A novelty in evening dress fabrics is white toilet sanglier, boar's cloth, a heavy, all-wool material, dotted in raised fine points.

The jauntiest jackets for young girls are made of cream and drab-colored cloths, with collars and cuffs of olive, green, gendarme, garnet, blue or black velvet.

An inovation in underwear is seen in fine pink and blue flannel, beautifully embroidered in flowers, with white floss; other more costly underwear comes in silk, in such colors as red, blue, rose color and olive green. White skirts are no longer worn in the street. Black satin, or Japanese blue, scarlet or olive green satin and flannel take their place.

Dinner dresses are open no longer, either in a square or V shape, but in an oval shape, and a tiny chemisette (called modiste) is worn inside; it is of lace or embroidered muslin, and the edge of the opening is trimmed with a fluting of white lace or crepe lisse; the semi-skirt and very tight sleeves have a white finish to correspond.

Fireside Chat.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND CHRISTMAS CHEER.

THE spirit of Christmas has again brought its happy influence among us, and everywhere loving hands and hearts are busily occupied with the preparations for Merry Christmas Day. The Christmas tree is always prominent among these preparations, and while many cling with time-honored veneration to this method of distributing gifts, ingenuity has devised others, in a description of which my readers may find something useful.

One amusing, and to children highly exciting way of distributing presents, is to dress up somebody as Father Christmas, and bring him into the room laden with the gifts hung about him, or with a large, light case containing them all. He should make a speech, and say something to each child on presenting the gift. His clothes should be covered with flakes of snow,—bits of cotton wool with powdered glass or alum sprinkled over, a little gum having first been put on. A white wig, moustache and beard, and a fur headdress sprinkled with frost, and a staff are all requisite. Another way is to let Father Christmas hold a reception in a sort of grotto, with frosted boughs and a background of snow, or a painted scene of winter. Usher the children in, and let them receive their presents from either him or an attendant "Snow," who should be a child standing by him, clothed entirely in cotton wool, with "frost" sprinkled over. I have seen children delighted with this, and much cogitation goes on as to who "Snow" is, or Father Christmas.

Then there is "the Gipsy," somebody standing behind a table, on which are the presents, dressed up and disguised, and somebody else behind her, hidden from view, whose arms come around her waist, and whose hands form her feet. These "feet" must have shoes and stockings on, and dance about, and the "Gipsy" must move her body and feign to be dancing. A curtain must be pinned close behind her, so that the hidden person is not visible.

Another mode of distributing gifts is, towards the close of the day's entertainment to make the children sit in a ring, each blindfolded, tell them that Father Christmas is going to bring them something, but they must sit quiet and not look, till music plays, then go round at the back of them, drop lightly each present into their laps, keep them waiting for a few minutes, and then strike up a merry tune. All the bandages will be torn off and each child finds her present.

The Christmas ship is another way of giving presents always appreciated by children. Roughly shape a ship out of some large boxes—that is to say, have one end pointed, and make a deck with pieces of wood, leaving a good hole for the cabin. Fill the cabin and load the deck with presents. Rig up sails of white paper or calico, and with a bright flag or two it looks very well. It is pushed or drawn into the room on Christmas Eve.

I have seen a snow cave, with an Ice King, which was made thus: Make a cave of great boughs; get a painter's large brush and dash white paint over them, then sprinkle thickly-powdered alum. Let the white paint be in patches like snow. If possible, get glass drops of all sizes, and drop them from the boughs nearest the audience, to look like icicles. Hang a lamp with a pinish shade from the top. Make a throne of a box, covered with wadding, and arrange everything to add to the effect at the sides and back, covering it all with wadding and some of that glazed net, which is sold for covering purposes at Berlin wool shops, or dashing as much powdered alum (with gum first dropped on) as possible, to make it all sparkle. If white sand is to be had, lay that on the ground. The Ice King should have a crown of white cardboard, cut in points, covered with wadding sprinkled with alum, with glass icicles dropping on to the forehead. Long hair, moustache, and beard of white wool, with icicles. Long robe of white calico or any white material, with wadding or swansdown round the neck, sleeves, and skirt, with patches of frosted wool dotted about. He should wield a wand with icicles dropping from it, and a large lump of frosted wool on the top. The light should be dim and thrown down from the shaded lamp above. If any dead birds are picked up about the time of the fete they could be laid about to add to the weirdness of the scene. A large snowball can be made of cardboard and covered with wadding, and put before the king, which he could open and distribute gifts from. The best way of making this is to have thin bits of wood bent to the shape at distances, then a coning of calico and wadding, previously prepared, tacked over, and sewn with red ribbon on the side next the King and away from the spectators. This string should be cut quickly at the time of distribution, and discover the wooden frame, into which the hand could go easily and draw out the presents. The wooden bars forming the ball should be far apart to admit of this; they must be, of course, bent to shape. Any carpenter or handy man could do this easily. An address might be spoken by the King, in a sepulchral voice, and a few remarks made as each gift is distributed. Sometimes the Ice King has a mantle thrown over him, made entirely of wadding or calico, which has a good effect.

Another way for making the framework of the snowball of cane or whalebone in two halves, covered with rather thin paper and then with wadding. The two halves should be so lightly attached that when rolled into the room they divide in half, and the presents placed inside are clearly visible. The cave is best extemporized with a large sheet, which, by means of boxes, bundles, etc., presents a surface like angles and blocks. These should be well covered with white wadding and sprinkled with frosting powder. The Ice King should be clothed in white, with long white hair and beard, all scattered over with frost-powder; a wreath of holly about his head and a wand in his hand.

DOLLS, TOYS, AND NEW GAMES.

Of all the nations in the world, it used to be said, none made so much provision for the amusement and enjoyment of their children as the Japanese. In our mania for copying them, we appear to have followed their example in this, as in other things; and certainly this year we bid fair to rival them in the bountiful preparations made for suitable Christmas gifts.

A visit to toy shops will prove all that we have said and so also will the numberless novelties brought out for the occasion. The most remarkable of these is perhaps the "Ondine," or swimming doll, a wonderful mechanical toy, quite appropriate to these days of excitement on the subject. She can swim, when wound up, either on her chest or back, according as her head is bent backwards or forwards. The Swimming Dog, another water toy, is a large Newfoundland, singularly well modelled which "walks the waters like a thing of life." Both these require a good sized tank or large bath in which to disport themselves, as they are by no means small. The fancy for mechanical animals shows itself largely in the new toys. There is a clever swimming fish, a magnificent peacock that raises its tail and spreads it with the most natural pride; a white rabbit, which raises itself on its hind legs, and gnaws a carrot so cleverly that it must be a faithful portrayal of the original animal in "Alice in Wonderland." The Kicking Baby is another clever invention; this naughty infant shakes its head wrings its hands, says "Papa" and "Mamma," and cried aloud when laid down to sleep.

The difference of English and French manufacture is plainly seen in the very cast of the dolls' features. The first-named are modelled, we are told, from life, and are purely English in their bonnie and innocent prettiness. The French are pretty, too, but without the childishness of the English dolls, which is their greatest charm. The French jointed dolls, which turn their heads and move their limbs, are so well shaped as to be suitable for artists' models. They have such pretty natural hair, which can be dressed at pleasure. Apropos of this, we saw a large collection of wigs and coiffures for dolls, so that when the youthful mamma is tired of one fashion she can obtain another.

The rag dolls, with china faces and heads, are very pleasant companions, as they are light to carry. A magnificent doll of English manufacture was 38 inches in height, and was also remarkably light, her body being stuffed with wool. The London maker of many of these dolls has become quite famous for their prettiness of face. They are all modelled we are informed, from his own children. The dolls can be dressed and undressed, and are dressed in the fashionable costume of the day, the latest fashions are seen in them—tied-back skirts, lined with the needful 'balayeuse," plaid costumes, and the wildest mixtures of pale blue and dark green, and dark green and pale pink. It is almost impossible to have an idea of the luxurious style of the present fashionable doll. Besides being clothed in the last fashion—buttoned boots, black silk stockings, gloves with five and eight buttons, collar, cuffs, cape, and fichus of lace—she has purse-holder, double eye-glasses, chatelaines, and every kind of comb and brush which could be mentioned. Moreover, she usually has hair which can be combed, brushed, and dressed. A fine lady in process of dressing had an under petticoat of pale blue satin puffed, with a train of grenat silk, edged with Ragusa lace; cap to match.

The most complete and delightful present for a little girl would be, we should think, one of the "Cassettes," containing a doll and her whole trousseau, down to the smallest article. The dresses seemed beautifully made, and so did the small specimens of underclothing; and the doll lay in the midst, a Princess of a Sleeping Beauty, waiting for some little mistress to wake her up to play.

Several new games have been brought out; of these Ballo is played with a cue and ball; the cue is balanced on a rest over a board, with round holes in it, the holes numbering up to 100. Three India-rubber balls are used, which are aimed at the holes. A game called Egg Shy is a fashionable kind of Aunt Sally, played with posts, on which the ivory eggs are placed. Short sticks are then used to aim at, and knock over the eggs.

The leather housewife's letter cases and card cases of Austrian manufacture are prettier this year than we have ever seen them. They are decorated with the most delicate sprays of flowers in silk embroidery or painting, and the leather used is dyed to the most exquisite pale shades of color—canary, blue, salmon, and sea-green. A new shape of pocket housewife is composed of a half circle of leather, which is folded up into four pointed melon-shaped quarters, containing respectively buttons, needles, silk, and court plaster; a pair of tiny scissors is fastened to the outside. The clasp of one of the leather card cases was formed by an exquisitely-made lady-bird, while on the flap was painted a spray of corn-flowers and a silvered square for the initials. Inside there is a well arranged calendar for 1880, on a new plan. A lady's traveling bag was well fitted up with every necessary for the toilette, but was especially attractive from the fact that it was quite small enough for any lady to carry herself, and yet was commodious enough to contain combs, brushes, night-dress, and lingerie sufficient for a night or two's absence from home.

Celluloid cigarette cases, made to imitate real shell or malachite, appear among holiday goods.

Pretty shopping bracelets have pencils attached, either of silver or gold, and frequently these are richly jeweled.

Among novelties in bracelets some of hammered gold show small indentations of the hammer over the surface; others are set with diamonds and other jewels.

A lace pin simulating a piece of crumpled lace, formed of small diamonds and pinned with a pearl-handled golden pin, makes a tasteful and costly Christmas present.

Answers to Inquirers.

OLD SUBSCRIBER, (Philadelphia, Pa.)—Short-hand can be readily learned without a master. Graham's system, in our opinion, is the simplest and best.

E. G. (Clayton, N. J.) We have never heard of the story you mention. Send a postal with your inquiry to J. B. Lippincott & Co., publishers, Philadelphia

COMPARE, (Washington, D. C.)—The war-footing of the english army in 1878 (including of course troops for the colonies and volunteers for home defense) was 663,129 men.

H. T. B. (Cheatham, Tenn.)—The abbreviations, "sæc. XIII., sæc. XIV" mean seculum, or age, or, as we say, century. They refer to manuscripts of those centuries.

S. G. (Terrell, Tex.)—We do not undertake to pass our opinion on pieces of poetry that may be forwarded to us. We have not time to attend to the numerous specimens that are sent us.

E. G. (Greene, Pa.)—The name Anne is of Hebrew origin (Hannah), and means "gracious." The name Emily is corrupted from Amelia, and means "beloved." Rose means "a rose."

CHRISTINA, (Wyandot, O.)—There is no fixed age at which a lady is considered an "old maid." 2. The hair should never be curled with the tongs. 3 It improves it to wash it in warm water once a week.

HEATHCOX, (Irwin, Ga.)—No one can give you a positive opinion as to whether first or second love is the deeper. All depends upon the temperament of the person who loves and the attractiveness of the person loved.

VIRGINIA, (Alleghany, Pa.)—"Paul and Virginia" is a story translated from the French of Bernard St. Pierre. It would require too much space to give you the plot in this column. You can procure the book very cheaply at almost any bookstore.

ELLA R. (Monroe, W. Va.)—It is an act of folly for a woman to marry a man who is "ungovernably jealous." Such a husband is always certain to make a wife miserable, and to go on from bad to worse, until she will be glad to escape to the refuge of the grave.

GUILTY, (Tolland, Conn.)—It is necessary to expose evil; but it is also incumbent on those who do so to act wisely and prudently, and not be misled by feeling. We applaud the motive, but not the method of procedure, and would prefer not to notice the matter further.

LYNIE, (Nevada, Cal.)—We think as you do, but outside advice is a dangerous thing to give to married people who are in trouble with each other, and we can't help you. Don't spend your life in bickering, at any rate. Accept the situation, if you cannot change it, and be as happy as you can.

READER, (Quincy, Ill.)—It is not either fashionable or tasteful to wear rings over kid gloves. 2. It is a custom in some Oriental countries to so bury the dead because the sun rises in the East, and the point is otherwise connected with their religious beliefs. The rule is not observed in America.

E. K. (Iredell, N. C.)—An offensive breath may arise from decayed teeth, diseased lungs, or disordered stomach. In most instances a remedy may be found in a solution of chlorinated soda, eight or ten drops of which should be taken in a wineglass of water every morning before breakfast.

E. D. C. (New York, N. Y.)—The reason why election day is held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday is probably to comply with the proverbial legal strictness and apparent obscurity of language. It would seem to be just as well to say the "first Tuesday," but the law-makers appear to think differently.

HONOR, (Tabo, Mo.)—Perhaps the idea of having a boy lover doesn't strike her seriously. The best way for you is to avoid the subject she seems so disinclined to pursue, and wait until she gives indications that she wishes you to take it up again. Love-making at your age is apt not to be a very serious matter any way.

GEORGE, (Philadelphia, Pa.)—You failed to send stamps necessary for the return of your MSS. 2. The Jewish Talmud is divided into the Mishna (the oral law) and the Gemara (commentary on the Mishna). The Mishna, which is described variously to mean "instruction," "mixtures" or "miscellanies," is divided into six parts, which are subdivided.

E. E. (Symsonia, Ky.)—There are so many preparations of iron used in medicine that it is impossible to give a positive answer to your query about "iron wine." The albuminate of iron is supposed to combine best with the tissues of the body. It is prepared as follows: Dissolve well-washed hydrated protoxide or peroxide of iron in white of egg, previously diluted with twice its weight of water and filtered.

E. D. (Baltimore, Md.)—A gentleman on offering a lady his arm to escort her from the drawing-room to the dining-room, merely says, "May I have the honor" or something of that sort. There are no fixed rules of etiquette in such cases, because so much depends upon the degree of intimacy subsisting between the two. As a matter of course, a stranger or mere acquaintance must be far more formal in his conduct than an old acquaintance or intimate friend.

YOUTH, (Philadelphia, Pa.)—It is quite right to spell guerrilla and garrotte with two r's. The first from guerre (Sp. war), is a diminutive, and must carry the double r. If you heard an Italian, Spaniard, or Frenchman shout out their word guerre or guerra you would hear why there are two "r's." The same answer, that of derivation, will serve for "garrotte." Newspaper printers are in a hurry to banish extra letters, and therefore fall into many errors.

J. H. (Luzerne, Pa.)—"Would it be proper," asks our fair correspondent, "for a young lady, forming a traveling acquaintance, to give the gentleman her name and address?" As a general rule it would not be proper for her to do so. A "traveling acquaintance" is, in fact, no real acquaintance at all. It is simply an exchange of necessary courtesies between strangers, who, by the exigencies of the occasion, are for a time thrown into one another's society; and a lady should not allow it to transcend the limits of such unavoidable courtesies.

HISTORY, (Outagamie, Wis.)—The first steamship that ever crossed the Atlantic was the Savannah, from Savannah to Liverpool in 1819. She sailed from Savannah, May 23d, but, her fuel having been consumed in ten days, she did not reach Liverpool until June 23d. On April 23d, 1838, the English steam-packets Great Western and Sirius arrived at New York commencing a new and expeditious mode of intercourse between England and America. The Great Western, measuring 1,340 tons, made the passage in fourteen days, against head winds and a rough sea. Each of the three vessels above-named had paddles.

SWANSEA, (Parke, Ind.)—Shakspeare married Anne Hathaway, of Shottery, a little village near Stratford. He had three children; his son Hamlet, or Hamnet, died when young; his daughter Susannah married a Dr Hall, and is buried near her husband and her father. His other daughter was a twin child with Hamnet, and was born in 1585. Shakspeare was the father of all his children before he was twenty-one, and a grandfather at forty-three; and to his granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall, he bequeathed all his plate "except my broad silver and gilt bowl." There are now no descendants of Shakspeare living, even in the female line, and he never had any by the male line, his son dying when an infant.

E. H. W. (Philadelphia, Pa.)—An ancient and by no means improbable opinion, was that the original wedding-ring was a signet, which the husband handed to his wife on the day of his marriage, in token that he entrusted her with equal rights in the protection, management, and disposition of his property, more particularly his household and domestic effects. It would seem that in the early ages things of value were protected in cases, not locked, but sealed; and that the wife, in order to take care of these things, would require a facsimile of the husband's signet, to wear both as a pledge of trust and equity with him in domestic affairs, and also for the more convenient discharge of her duty as custodian of his valuables.

K. O. (Fisher, Ill.)—It unfortunately happens that as no man believes he is going to die soon, so everyone is much disposed to defer the consideration of what ought to be done on the supposition of such an emergency; and while nothing is so uncertain as human life, so nothing is so certain as our assurance that we shall survive most of our neighbors. But it may, indeed, occur to any that the chances are very nearly balanced as to his dying at forty and his reaching the uncertain age of forty-five; and that five years may make a considerable difference in the amount of the savings he may bequeath to his family. The determination to lay by often creates the power to lay by, and the first effort is the most difficult. Let it always be remembered that in putting by something for a rainy day, a man purchases a certain amount of mental tranquility, and thus he may actually extend his life by providing against the results of his death.